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## The Crete and Cretans of Euripides: Perceptions and Representations

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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000bf10>

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**TITLE PAGE**



**Bijon Kumar SINHA**

**Bachelor of Arts (Hons.), Master of Arts in Classical Studies, PGCE**

**The Crete and Cretans of Euripides: Perceptions and Representations**

**Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Classical Studies (Open  
University)**

**September, 2016**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks must first go to my Examiners, Professor Helen King and Dr. Jonathan Hesk for all their invaluable input, especially in helping me revise my conceptualisations and clarifying my conclusions. I am also inestimably grateful for the support, advice and direction given to me over the years by Professor Lorna Hardwick, Dr. James Robson and Dr. Elton Barker. They have made my journey through Greek tragedy both possible and momentous. Their unending patience and belief in my ability to see this project to a fruitful conclusion have themselves been all-inspiring. I also owe my thanks to the Classical Department at the Open University for their help and support throughout the duration. My thanks must also go to Sue Willetts, Christopher Ashill and the team at the Hellenic Library in London for their generous resource and spirit. My several visits to Athens, Knossos and Epidauros, made possible by the Open University, have provided great insights and opportunities for my involvement with Greek drama. I am also indebted to Dr. James Robson for his diligent and helpful proof reading efforts. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Sue Blundell, my M.A. supervisor and friend; also, my sisters, Kalpana and Lalita, for providing me much-needed inspiration over the years, Sobi, for her revelatory insights and her love, Jill and Phil for their continued interest in my subject, and last but not least, my partner and friend, Richard Northridge, for his unflinching support and understanding throughout the duration of this project.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE and ABBREVIATIONS

Editions of ancient texts and commentaries are referenced under the editors' names.

Quotations and citations from the Greek are taken from Loeb or Aris and Philips editions unless otherwise noted. Translations from the Greek are my own unless otherwise indicated. Greek words used in the main text have been transliterated throughout.

### Abbreviations

*LSJ*            Liddel, Scott and Jones (2007)

*TLG*            Thesaurus linguae Graecae

All other abbreviations follow the *LSJ* lexicon (1968)

**Bijon Sinha**

## **The Crete and Cretans of Euripides: Perceptions and Representations**

### **Abstract**

This thesis focuses on Euripides' dramatic representations of Crete, famous from myth, geography, art, literature and philosophy. This thesis will attempt to address the following key questions: how is Crete represented in the extant Euripidean plays and fragments? How consistent are such representations between themselves? How are the Cretan mythological characters deployed? How are previous representations of Crete re-stated or adapted? What questions of association and identity appear to be raised? What kinds of multiple identities and their potential for interpretation are to be found in the plays? How do these relate to paradigms found in other sources? And finally, do Euripides' representations of Crete as an island as constructed in these works contribute to a wider understanding of the relationship between the islands and Athens?

Various themes emerge from detailed textual analyses which stress Crete's distinct, isolated nature, including the portrayals of Minos, Cretan women, the Minotaur, Cretan gods and spirits and the location of Crete itself. Many of these themes are also deployed paradoxically to stress, instead, Crete's links with the mainland. Overall, common themes emerge that can be usefully considered in terms of two



contemporary, theoretical models - insularity and interconnectivity-, which offer insights into the complex relationships of difference and similarity between islands and the mainland.

In terms of insularity, Crete is viewed as an 'island', distant and distinct from Athens. The model of interconnectivity, conversely, stresses links between Crete and other regions as suggested by the many travels undertaken by protagonists in these works. Insularity and interconnectivity, then, can be used to consider Euripides' Crete as part of a continuum between complete independence from and complete integration with the outside world. By considering models of insularity and interconnectivity specifically in relation to drama, this thesis departs in new directions from previous studies.

Chapter 1 outlines the research questions raised in the study of Cretanism and explains the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 entails textual analyses of the references to Crete in *Hippolytus*. Chapter 3 involves textual analyses of the fragmentary *The Cretans*, illustrating how Cretans on Crete are represented. Chapter 4 considers emerging themes used to emphasize Cretanism, which, in turn, reinforce Crete's distinctive, insular nature. Chapter 5 considers the evidence in terms of insularity and interconnectivity. These models highlight difference and separation, as well as similarity and interconnectivity between Crete, Athens and the rest of the Greek world. Chapter 6 reflects on the findings of previous chapters, arguing that

certain models of insularity and interconnectivity can be usefully drawn out of Euripides' representations of Crete to offer insights into the perceptions of islands in drama.

## Chapter 1

### The Crete of Euripides: An Overview

#### 1.1 Introduction

Islands comprise a significant proportion of space in the physical and perceptual composition of the ancient Greek world,<sup>1</sup> but their inclusion as settings in tragedy at first appears much less common than might be expected. Those that occur appear to be limited to a few extant works that include Sophocles' *Philoctetes* set on Lemnos, plays by both Aeschylus and Euripides believed to have been entitled (or about) *Women of Aetna* and set in Sicily, and Euripides' *Scyrians* set on Scyros. However, a corpus of works based on Crete by dramatists of the fifth and fourth centuries also survives. In fact, the theme of Crete and its mythological figures appears, by all accounts, to have been rather popular in drama.<sup>2</sup> Although references to these works can be found in classical literature, most of the works themselves are lost. In the case of Euripides, all that survive are one complete play, and several fragments.<sup>3</sup> This last grouping of works by Euripides bearing references to Crete and its mythical cycles forms the basis of this thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> As an illustration, the numerous islands (nearly 2,000) comprise the fourth most important geographical region of modern Greece covering a total area of c. 25,000 sq. km. In the ancient world, 'an island' was perceived as comprising the piece of land, the surrounding seas, and their respective histories (see Constantakopoulou 2007: 1).

<sup>2</sup> Other than the works by Euripides, there are also references to plays including Aeschylus' *Cressae*, Sophocles' *Phaedra*, *Polydus*, *Daedalus*, *Theseus*, and *Camici* (or *Minos*); also a *Daedalus* each by Aristophanes, Plato, Eubulus (or Philippus); a *Theseus* each by Aristonymus, Achaeus, Theopompus, Anaxandrides; *The Cretans* by Diphilus Nicochares; a *Minos* each by Apollophanes and Antiphanes, and a *Pasiphae* each by Alexis and Alcaeus (see Chapter 3 for a further discussion).

<sup>3</sup> The one play being *Hippolytus*; noting, however, that while there are references in that work to Crete, it is set in Troezen.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This thesis will attempt to address the following key questions: how is Crete represented in the extant Euripidean plays and fragments? How consistent are such representations between themselves? How are the Cretan mythological characters deployed? How are previous representations of Crete re-stated or adapted? What questions of association and identity appear to be raised? What kinds of multiple identities and their potential for interpretation are to be found in the plays? How do these relate to paradigms found in other sources? And finally, do Euripides' representations of Crete as an island as constructed in these works contribute to a wider understanding of the relationship between the islands and Athens?

## 1.3 Methodology

In considering Euripides' representations of Crete in his dramatic works, I start with textual analysis in order to address the key points, as outlined above. The works which are considered include the surviving, second version of the Hippolytus story, *Hippolytus* *Stephanephorus*, and the selected fragments including *The Cretans*, *Theseus*, *Cretan Women*, *Polyidus*, *Hypsipyle* and *Phrixus B*, given that they contain the most important references where Euripides' representations of Crete and Cretans are concerned.<sup>4</sup> The fragmentary first version of the Hippolytus story, *Hippolytus*

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<sup>4</sup> Euripides' works analysed in this thesis consists of extant plays and fragments; although I have identified as many works as possible by Euripides on the theme of Crete, it may be the case that there were other works on the same theme that are now lost to us.

*Kaluptomenos*, has also been considered but is not included among the plays selected for detailed analysis in this thesis given that its surviving fragments (apart from possibly one, f444, discussed later in the thesis) do not appear to add directly to a study of 'Cretanism'. In considering Euripides' representation of Crete, I have coined the term 'Cretanism' which is used throughout the thesis to encompass the various characteristics and attributes that appear to be associated with the island of Crete and its characters from myth.

Given the importance of locales as settings in tragedy, the question of Crete as a specific place and its 'role' in tragedy is also a question that will be considered.

Against the example of Thebes in Athenian tragedy, a city that appears to be under constant siege, and which regularly serves as a mirror reflecting problems affecting the Athenian polis, the role of Crete will be considered in the light of comparison and contrast, given the island's image as the place connected with morally loose women, semi-human creatures, and bestiality.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, protagonists' modes of address (including self-references) and the contexts of place will be analysed when considering relevant passages from the selected works.

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<sup>5</sup> For Thebes as a 'control' see Zeitlin 1986: 101-141. Other 'controls' include Colchis in Eur. *Medea*, discussed in Chapters 2 and 6. I also reflect on these issues in the concluding section of Chapter 6.

#### 1.4 Commentaries and Translations:

For the selected works the original Greek texts and also some English translations were used as the primary source texts.<sup>6</sup> For detailed work on passages, commentaries were used (e.g. in Chapter 2 on *Hippolytus*, Barrett's (2001) [1964] was consulted). For the passages in Greek from *Hippolytus*, the *Oxford Classical Text* (OCT) (Diggle 1984) was also used. In cases in Chapter 2 where the Kovacs/Loeb (1995) parallel text and translation were drawn upon, these were checked back with the OCT version; where differences between the two texts arose, these are commented upon *ad loc.* as necessary. For key words, ideas and imagery encountered in the texts, important passages which were 'problematic' for various reasons, and where 'contentious' words or phrases and their multiple ranges of meaning arose, more than one translation was referred to, with *LSJ*, also consulted for clarifications. For the fragmentary material, it is noteworthy that only a relatively limited number of sources were available as primary sources in text and translation; these included Cantarella (1964) as well as Collard and Cropp (2008a and 2008b). The latter was also used as a source of commentary on key passages discussed in this study.

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<sup>6</sup> Translations in Spanish have also been used in this manner in Chapters 3 and 4.

## 1.5 Euripides and the dramatic treatment of Crete as an island

The island of Crete was certainly famous from myth and epic: its striking features include its significant size (it is the largest island in the Aegean and one of the largest in the whole of the Mediterranean)<sup>7</sup> and its dramatic landscape (its rugged interior with high and iconic mountains and a notoriously inhospitable coastline).<sup>8</sup> Its location also played a vital role, strategically positioned on well-plied trade routes, and one of the most southerly outposts of the Greek world.<sup>9</sup> It was also renowned for its wealth and fertility,<sup>10</sup> its fame as a sea power,<sup>11</sup> and of course, as the setting for so many myths, possibly more than any other Greek island, and as the birth-place of the chief Olympian god, Zeus.<sup>12</sup> There is little doubt that it was these features, both singly and in combination, that stirred the artistic imagination of the fifth-century dramatists. Not only were Crete's myths and legends repeatedly reflected in art and theatre (especially from the sixth to fourth centuries BC), but the island was also the setting for philosophical treatises (including Plato's *Minos* and *Laws*).<sup>13</sup> Its ancient historical origins, material or imagined (including its great mix of languages and ethnic groups),<sup>14</sup> its famous cities, including Knossos, seat of Minos, and the fact that

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<sup>7</sup> It is the largest of the Greek islands, and the fifth largest in the Mediterranean after Sicily, Sardinia, Cyprus and Corsica.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. as home to the famous Mt. Ida; also see *Od.* 3.286-300 for the dangers it posed to sailors.

<sup>9</sup> But also on the very edge of the 'civilized world'. Euripides assigned it to 'Nearly on the very fringes of Europe' (Euripides *Theseus* f381).

<sup>10</sup> E.g. *Od.* 14.199-201; 19.172-4

<sup>11</sup> Herodotus 1.171-2; Thucydides 1.4

<sup>12</sup> Hesiod *Theogony* 477-94

<sup>13</sup> See Morrow 1960 esp. 17-35 for a comprehensive account of 'why Crete mattered to Plato'. This thesis, however, only briefly considers the island as a model in philosophy.

<sup>14</sup> *Od.* 19.175-7; see also Wallace 2010: 365

it was acknowledged by the ancient Greek world as the 'first civilization', all contributed to making it unique.

So, it is less than surprising that Euripides and other fifth-century playwrights set a significant number of their works on Crete and so often wrote about Cretan mythological characters. Given that works by Euripides form the bulk of surviving plays on the theme of Crete (albeit mostly surviving in fragmentary form), a study of this corpus brings with it distinct advantages: it provides insights into the views and perspectives both on Crete itself and, I suggest, more generally on how islands were presented and conceived in fifth-century drama.

## **1.6 The cycle of Cretan myths**

Poets and dramatists have adapted and retold different versions of mythological stories from epic onwards, the evolving tradition itself extending and re-imagining the corpus of myth in novel ways. It is plausible to assume that in the case of the Cretan myths, their treatment by fifth-century tragedians, including Euripides, formed part of this trend. In order to contextualise the cycle of Cretan myths by Euripides included in these works, Appendix 1 to this chapter provides a summary of these myths, indicating their ancient sources wherever possible. Rather than suggesting that there existed a single canonical version of any given myth, the summary intends to perform two functions: first, it traces the stories, wherever possible, to their earlier sources before Euripides and to contemporary, fifth-century



as well as later sources.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, it is hoped that the summary will indicate the links in the storylines between Euripides' various 'Cretan plays', a full list of which is provided in Appendix 2.<sup>16</sup> This list has been collated from the studies of Euripides' fragments by Cantarella (1964) and Collard and Cropp (2008a and 2008b) who themselves base their studies on the works of Apollodorus and Hyginus, among others, in cases where no earlier evidence survives.<sup>17</sup> The editions of Collard and Cropp have also been used as the standard text for the fragmentary plays in this study. In the main, however, most known versions of the Cretan myths follow the stories as set out in Appendix 1, at least in outline if not in detail. Euripides' 'Cretan plays', a term coined in this thesis to indicate works that bear references to the island, include *Hippolytus*, *Stephanephorus*, *The Cretans*, *Theseus*, *Cretan Women*, *Polydus*, *Hypsipyle* and *Phrixus B*. The scope of this thesis includes the characters of Minos, Pasiphae, Phaedra, Ariadne, Theseus, Aerope, the Minotaur and associated imagery as well as the gods, spirits and landscape of Crete occurring in these plays.

The study of Euripides' 'Cretan plays' as a whole is also an attempt to provide some insights into the development of ideas on the Cretan myths over the lifespan of the poet. An initial reading suggests that many of the main works included in this thesis

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<sup>15</sup> In quite a few cases, where the evidence for earlier sources has been entirely lost, later versions from the fourth century onwards have also been included which bear some kind of relevance to Euripides' works (for example, Plutarch, *Life of Theseus* XV. 2 has been used by modern scholars to partly reconstruct the plot of Euripides' *The Cretans* [see Collard and Cropp 2008a: 540]; similarly, Plutarch *Moralia* 28a is said to recall the first *Hippolytus*, a work which is now only survives in fragmentary form [see Collard and Cropp 2008a: 469]).

<sup>16</sup> This 'full list' is based on information currently available

<sup>17</sup> Apollodorus c180-120BC; Hyginus c64BC-17AD. These are later accounts of material that may or may not have been familiar to Euripides in earlier versions'

as part of the 'Cretan plays' were first staged within a ten-year span, indicating a clustering or a loose grouping of the 'Cretan theme'.<sup>18</sup> For example, *The Cretans* and both versions of *Hippolytus* could plausibly be assigned to the same part of Euripides' career.<sup>19</sup> Both contain visitations of unnatural love: in the former, Pasiphae's sexual attraction for a bull; in the latter, Phaedra's unnatural lust for her stepson. These two plays also raise questions of guilt, responsibility, culpability – and most notably, both are united by their common theme of 'unnatural Cretan sexuality'.<sup>20</sup>

Equally notable is the sequence in which Euripides wrote his versions of these stories. While the dates suggested for these works are only an approximation (see Appendix 2), it is nevertheless significant that Euripides does not seem to have followed any kind of chronological sequencing in structuring the narratives in his re-telling of these myths. For example, Phaedra's presence in Troezen in the two versions of *Hippolytus* (*Hippolytus Kaluptomenos* c.431BC; *Hippolytus Stephanephoros* c.428BC) was dramatised before that of Theseus' arrival on Crete in *Theseus* (c.422BC), whereas sequentially, the myths tell of Theseus' arrival on Crete as the starting point of his involvement with the Cretans – his relationship with Ariadne and the hero's subsequent marriage to Phaedra following on from his arrival on the island. Although the practice of not adhering strictly to the chronological re-telling

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<sup>18</sup> Appendix 2 to this chapter provides a list of the approximate chronology of these plays.

<sup>19</sup> See Mills 1997: 199-200; see also Cantarella 1964: 105-7

<sup>20</sup> See Mills 1997: 200

of myths is not unusual, it is still interesting for the modern reader to ponder on the reasons for this. For example, the order of the plays might be explained through the popularity of particular stories, or the characters or themes, or, political and social developments in Athens could have influenced Euripides' choice. Equally, preoccupations about the relationship between Athens and the rest of the Greek world, including the islands, could have lain behind their choice and timing. Or, it could of course have been a combination of these and other factors.<sup>21</sup> While there are no easy answers to these questions, they are nevertheless useful when considering how Crete was constructed in these dramatic works. Indeed, in Chapter 5, I specifically consider how the relationship between Athens and the islands of the Greek world could have impacted on dramatic works in the fifth century. The theme of Theseus in Euripidean drama, for example, is a particularly potent choice from a historical viewpoint;<sup>22</sup> the role of this figure in the making of myth-history is discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

The setting out of the chronology of the plays as they appear in Appendix 2 is not intended to imply that there are direct, easily traceable connections between Euripides' works and specific historical events. Rather; this thesis seeks instead to

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<sup>21</sup> As previously mentioned, there was substantial philosophical interest in the island too. See for example, Plato *Laws* 706a on the deliberate parallelism between Athens and Minos. See also Morrow 1960 for an interpretation of the *Laws* and esp. pp. 17-35 for a comprehensive account of 'why Crete mattered to Plato'; also the pseudo-Platonic *Minos*. See also Croally 1994 and Nightingale 1995 generally, on how tragedy and philosophy were in competition (but also complementary) with each other in terms of their didactic function in instructing the Athenian citizen.

<sup>22</sup> See Thucydides 2.15 on Theseus as king of Athens.

explore the plays from the perspective of the thought world of their audiences broadly conceived, taking into account their lived experiences (which includes, but is not restricted to their knowledge both of history and of contemporary events), with a view to exploring the wide range of factors that might have impacted upon the 'Cretan plays'.

Overall then, of the 'Cretan plays', the works that will be given the most detailed scrutiny in this study in terms of textual analysis will be the extant *Hippolytus* *Stephanephoros* as well as the fragments from *The Cretans* and *Theseus*. This choice has been made because these three works contain most of the poet's references to Crete and its myths. The other works that will also be referred to, although in lesser detail, are *Cretan Women*, *Polyidus* and *Hypsipyle*, while the remaining plays from the list of ten will be considered only briefly, when relevant to the themes being considered in each chapter (see Appendix 2). These remaining works are more fragmentary in nature than the others and, in most cases, a reconstruction of their respective plots remains difficult, if not impossible.

The main features of Euripides' representations of Crete gleaned from these plays will then be analysed in the ensuing chapters. Such representations of Crete are considered in the light of earlier ones from myth and literature. In short, these include the portrayals of mythical characters, the 'darker aspects' of Crete, and formulations of Cretan and Athenian identities.

As the detailed analyses of the textual evidence indicate, several distinctive themes emerge from this thesis' exploration of Cretanism. One prominent strand is the distinctive portrayal of Cretan royal women and their illicit sexual desires. Also notable is the striking use of bovine imagery where the poet deploys familiar, recurring motifs from Cretan mythological accounts, in particular, of the cow, the bull and the Minotaur, in paradoxical and novel ways. Crete's landscape, temples, gods and spirits are portrayed, paradoxically, to suggest aspects both familiar in an Athenian context as well as something distinctly Cretan. Crete's insular features serve to emphasize its differences from the mainland; at the same time, other elements such as the connecting seas and journeys by the protagonists highlight its ties with the mainland. In *Hippolytus*, we see the world of Crete being represented 'in Troezen' (the latter being the play's actual setting), realized in terms of Cretan mythology, landscape, gods and spirits. This notion of a Crete 'elsewhere' appears to emphasize the notion of an island being both distant from as well as 'present' on the mainland. These various themes together and in different ways can be usefully considered in terms of providing insights into the dynamic relationship between images of Crete and Athens as articulated in Euripidean drama. An important part of my study also involves exploring the evidence that emerges from detailed textual analyses of the works in the light of contemporary theoretical models of insularity and interconnectivity in order to consider how useful these are in providing insights into Euripides' representations of links between islands and the mainland.

In terms of the models of insularity, Crete can be viewed as an 'island', different and distinct from Athens. In Euripides' works, such differences appear to be explored from two perspectives. First, a 'mainland perspective': one that looks out to Crete, located as an island and distant from the heart of the Greek world. Secondly, Crete manifests itself metaphorically, with all its distinctive, insular features, on the mainland.

If insularity suggests distance and difference, then a second notion, that of interconnectivity, conversely, suggests a Crete that was part of an active network of islands. This view of the island stresses instead links – both physical as well as metaphorical - between Crete, Athens and the rest of the Greek world. A key perspective on such links is suggested by the many journeys undertaken by protagonists in the selected works, between the island and (variously) Athens/Attica, Troezen, Corinth, Argos, Sicily and Phoenicia. These links are analysed in detail in the various chapters.

Although the two strands of insularity and interconnectivity ostensibly suggest an opposition, I propose that they are, in fact, different ways of holding a balance between, on the one hand, links and commonalities, and on the other, regional differences. Crete's distinct, even bizarre nature is stressed first – this forms one side of the coin of insularity. On the obverse, however, we find Crete sketched as part of

a tightly connected network of contact and interaction, features which have the effect of linking different regions of the Greek world beyond and through 'insular differences', where the differences themselves form part of the greater, plural nature of Greek culture. In terms of Euripides' construct of Crete, then, the concepts of insularity and interconnectivity can be drawn on to locate an island as part of what has been referred to as 'a continuum between complete independence and complete integration with the outside world'.<sup>23</sup>

In terms of the use of the contemporary models of insularity and interconnectivity, this thesis departs in new directions compared with previous scholarship, in that it tests these models against the textual analysis of dramatic works. Previous scholarship on the ancient world has, to the best of my knowledge, so far only considered the models in the context of archaeological, historiographical and sociological studies.<sup>24</sup>

Overall, the selected 'Cretan plays' can be considered in (at least) two ways: first, the tragedies can be taken as 'stand-alone' dramatic works, each comprising a novel and innovative adaptation of well-known mythical stories. Secondly, as is the case here, when the 'Cretan plays' are studied together, there are common themes and ideas

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<sup>23</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 2 cf. Broodbank 2000:10

<sup>24</sup> That is, the studies undertaken to date (June 2016). See e.g. Broodbank 2000, Constantakopoulou 2007, Malkin, Constantakopoulou and Panagopoulou (eds.) 2009, Malkin 2011, Ceccarelli 2012a and b, on studies on historiographical and sociological approaches using these models.

that emerge that can be usefully considered in terms of insularity and interconnectivity, both of which provide fruitful models for considering fifth-century notions of the complex relationships between islands and the mainland.

As suggested earlier, 'the island' in general and Crete in particular, were important models in classical philosophical discourse. Crete mattered to Plato, who contemplated the island in terms of an ideal city state.<sup>25</sup> The degree of importance attributed to islands and to Crete in philosophy can also be discerned (albeit differently in each) in Euripides' 'Cretan plays'. Given that tragedy and philosophy were, to some extent, both serving a didactic function for Athenian citizens,<sup>26</sup> the deployment of Crete in both these genres raises the possibility of interesting interdisciplinary studies. (This thesis, however, while focusing on its deployment in tragedy, only considers in brief the notion of Crete as a philosophical model).

### **1.7 The treatment of mythological characters and themes**

The variety of the mythological characters and themes referred to in this study - and the many variants of the stories involved - indicate clearly the general idea that there was "'no mythological 'orthodoxy' in fifth-century Athens'".<sup>27</sup> There was no fixed body of stories to which the playwrights gave dramatic form; instead, the poets

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<sup>25</sup> I.e. Knossos, in particular; see Plato *Laws*; also *Minos*; also see Morrow 1960; Constantakopoulou 2007 (esp. p.96)

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. Croally 1994; Nightingale 1995.

<sup>27</sup> Burian 1999: 184



themselves became the mythmakers, inventing, often adapting and innovating versions of tales that they previously encountered, with often the same stories or even, just aspects of the stories being given focus, and dramatized over and over again, often in completely different ways, by different – or sometimes, even the same – playwrights.<sup>28</sup> With a few exceptions, the tragic poets developed their plots within the framework of legendary tradition, basing their works on earlier poets such as Homer; only on rare occasions did they employ invented tales or base their plays on recent history.<sup>29</sup> In this study of Euripides' 'Cretan plays', I treat the repertoire of mythical stories used not treated as a corpus of discrete narratives but as a network of interconnections. This approach enables a thematic study on Crete, and the Cretan myths as related by Euripides.

Euripides presented the Cretan stories that he inherited in novel and innovative ways, adapting the myths and changing key elements within the stories he encountered. As mentioned previously, such innovations appear to be fairly standard practice at least among the three key tragedians of fifth-century Athens. So, this thesis considers, as far as evidence allows, the versions of the myths that were inherited by Euripides from fifth-century and pre-fifth-century sources, and

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<sup>28</sup> E.g. Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, Sophocles' *Electra* and Euripides' *Electra* constitute a group of plays on the same mythical subject by all three tragedians, examples of repetition and innovation at work, each 'supplementing, challenging, displacing, but never simply replacing all the rest.' (Burian 1999:180)

<sup>29</sup> An example of a direct Homeric cross-reference is Sophocles *Ajax* (based on an episode in the *Iliad* Book 6). Examples of recent history include Aeschylus *Persians* (and in some views, Aeschylus *Eumenides*). Often, there also were 'cross-overs' from myth to invention, e.g. in the case of Euripides *Hippolytus*, the character of Phaedra, known from mythical accounts, was woven into an entirely novel story, not known in myth. Also Euripides *Helen*, part-myth, but largely invention.

how Euripides' innovations may have supplemented, even complemented, earlier versions.<sup>30</sup> Such observations about the possible manipulation of earlier stories by the playwrights can also help to provide insights into the multi-functionality and multi-layered meanings of myths.<sup>31</sup>

As we shall see in the chosen plays, Euripides' use of existing elements of the Cretan myths, together with his introduction of new elements, created novel versions of these stories for fifth-century audiences. The aspects of the myths that are illustrative of this mix of 'old' and 'new' include the use of themes such as Cretan royal women, Cretan gods and spirits, sea- and landscapes, the bull, the Minotaur and bovine features generally. Euripides' adaptation and deployment of particular aspects of the myths was not only an indication of their fluid, malleable nature but also facilitated his nuanced treatment of Crete and Cretanism. So, apart from considering how the myths were adapted from earlier sources and deployed as a focus on Crete, this thesis will also consider how their fluid, malleable nature allows them to be studied in terms of the twenty-first century models of insularity and interconnectivity.

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<sup>30</sup> An example of such a 'Euripidean variant' may be seen in the case of the fragmentary play, *The Cretans* (discussed in detail in Chapter 3); in that work, while the story of Pasiphae's affair with the bull had many extant versions, it is possibly only in Euripides' version that we learn that the queen is sentenced to death in an underground prison by her own husband, king Minos of Crete.

<sup>31</sup> As Clark (2012:54) suggests 'The interpretation of a myth (...) is not the search for the correct meaning of the story, but rather the investigation of the range of meanings it has been given.'; '(...) the basic structure of a myth may offer itself for varying interpretation depending on the purposes of the teller' (ibid:66)

In terms of the shaping of myths, a majority of the stories featured in Euripides' Cretan works 'cluster around the family of the great king Minos...'.<sup>32</sup> These myths include the Cretan king's rule as thalassocrat, his establishment of a code of law, his cruel persecution of enemies, and his own actions which could be said to result in his wife, Pasiphae, mating with a bull to produce the monstrous Minotaur. Minos' contradictory roles as piratical, as well as ridder of pirates, his combination of greatness and depravity and so on, are traits which also filter into subsequent generations of the royal family. These character traits, to a greater or lesser degree, fed into the versions of the stories in the shaping of Cretan paradoxes, that, in turn, played a part in shaping Athenian views of Cretans as a whole. This thesis will analyse Euripides' 'Cretan plays' in terms of the features associated with Minos which appear to have a bearing on Euripides' portrayals of Cretanism.

The royal women who feature in Euripides' 'Cretan plays' include Pasiphae, Phaedra, Ariadne and Aerope. This thesis also considers their portrayal in Euripides' works in terms of Cretanism. One aspect of their characterization comprises the idea of inherited, 'unnatural sexual proclivities' traced through generations of Cretan women, which becomes a metaphor for 'the Cretan woman' (for example, Phaedra and Pasiphae in *Hippolytus* and in *The Cretans*, respectively).<sup>33</sup> So, this thesis considers in particular how this theme of Cretan women is deployed

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<sup>32</sup> See Armstrong 2006: 1; Armstrong's study traces the role of the Cretan women from mythology and Homer, through to Greek tragedy, to the genre of Latin poetry.

<sup>33</sup> See e.g. Reckford 1974 for an insightful essay on the two Cretan women.

in Euripides' works, not just as a motif of the particular women, but more generally, to emphasize a 'Cretan-ness' which draws on aspects of gender and sexuality to construct a distinctive but sometimes ambivalent kind of Cretan 'nature'.

### 1.8 Crete's 'darker aspects'

The stories associated with Minos' family also appear to emphasize another aspect of Cretanism – its 'darker side', a view that appears to have its origins in myth and earlier literature.<sup>34</sup> As previous studies have shown, these 'darker' aspects include Minos' portrayal as a savage and unjust tyrant, Phaedra and Pasiphae as sexually immoral women, and Cretans as liars.<sup>35</sup> A view emerges in early literature of a strange, mysterious Crete, home to the morally corrupt. This thesis will re-assess those findings, and consider to what extent Euripides' construct of Crete adopts this earlier emphasis on 'the darker sides of Crete' while redeploying in novel, paradoxical ways, such pre-existing views of the island.

Particular supernatural motifs, notably involving bovine imagery, also appear repeatedly as a theme in the 'Cretan plays' as if to emphasize the island's dark and bizarre aspects. The bull, cow and Minotaur are featured mostly in the context of the Cretan women protagonists' sexual desires. In *The Cretans*, Pasiphae is disguised as a cow which mates with a bull to produce the half-human, half-bull creature, the

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<sup>34</sup> A term used in Rosenquist 1978

<sup>35</sup> See the studies by Rosenquist 1978 (esp. p.58); Haft 1981

Minotaur. In *Hippolytus*, Phaedra recalls Pasiphae's love affair with the bull. In *Polyidus*, a colour-changing calf becomes a portent for Minos. The deployment of this bovine theme is considered in Chapter 4. Other extraordinary events that occur in the plays (or are alluded to) include the building of a labyrinth to house the Minotaur, Daedalus' invention of giant, bird-like wings to flee Crete and Aerope being put to death by being fed to fishes. As I suggest later in the context of 'insularity', these bizarre episodes (including Cretan women's fetishes for the bovine) ostensibly emphasize Crete's distinct nature as an island. Yet, as I also propose in this thesis, in Euripides' hands, these darker aspects are turned on their head as a paradox to suggest that such differences are also present in Athens as a result of the 'connectedness' of the island to the mainland.

## **1.9 Formulations of identity**

Through a detailed study of the 'Cretan plays', this thesis attempts to uncover and analyse concepts of identity and the practices and characteristics associated with them. In Euripides' works, the questions pertaining to identity appear at times to be articulated in terms of the poet's constructed versions of Greece-Athens-Crete. Certain antinomies such as Greek-barbarian, male-female, Athenian-Cretan, transgressive-submissive females, human-animal, and so on, seem to be explored in different ways, in the selected works. It also appears that these themes are framed by place and associated paradigms; e.g. the notion of being an Athenian citizen (or a Cretan) appears to be addressed by the protagonists' presence either on mainland

Greece or on Crete. In this way, the subtle variations in the display of opposing notions, the extreme polarities from being an Athenian citizen to being a barbarian appear to be articulated through key attributes such as distance, otherness, women lacking sexual self-control, the gods' indifference to man, and its consequences.

The concerns reflected in the formulations of Athenian-Cretan identities are highlighted in at least two ways, in the plays, first, in terms of the idea of elements of commonality. This has been characterised in previous studies as 'the other within the self' or 'the Crete within our several hearts', that is, the idea that the Cretan characters' doom somehow also spells a more universal doom, where the Cretan-Athenian spheres of reference cannot be kept separate and isolated from each other.<sup>36</sup>

Conversely (and secondly), we also find that the particularity of Cretan identity is somewhat exemplified in the character of Minos. The importance of Minos as a powerful king of Crete is evident from the 'Cretan plays'. As previously indicated, in terms of Cretanism, it appears that a kind of 'Cretan identity' came to be forged (by Athenian tragedians) based on these very myths, taking their cue from the general traits and attributes shared by Cretan characters, including Minos, on whom the playwrights chose to focus. In Euripides, the character of Theseus also features

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<sup>36</sup> See Reckford 1974: 328, also, Reckford generally on Cretan women in Euripides' works.

as a counterpoint to Minos, especially in *Theseus*: indeed, the tensions between Minos and Theseus seem to be highlighted in this play, stressing differences between Cretan and Athenian.

These two protagonists are perhaps emblematic of a deeper and more complex difference between the two regions with which they are identified. And the latent hostility between them also exemplifies the fifth-century Athenian process of drawing on myth (Minos as traditional ruler of the seas) to reflect on contemporary issues and events (Athens as the new sea power).<sup>37</sup> The development of Theseus' role (as Athenian icon *par excellence*, with the protagonist-hero represented as the founder of democracy) is perhaps an example of how and why these Cretan themes were used in the furtherance of a process which shaped Athenian views of Crete and Cretans. This thesis builds on earlier scholarship by Mills and others by analysing the roles of Minos and Theseus in Euripides' works in Chapters 4 and 5, which mainly focus on *Theseus* and *The Cretans*.<sup>38</sup> It will be argued that Minos was crucial to the creation of a foil for Athens, with the Cretan ruler characteristically pitted against its mighty Athenian hero, Theseus. The view that ultimately emerges of Theseus, however, is a mixed one. As Mills (1997) suggests in describing Athenian attempts to cope with these contradictions, 'Theseus seemed the perfect citizen of Athens, but under this exterior lay a heartless seducer, rapist and killer of his own

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<sup>37</sup> See Mills 1997 for a study of the deployment of Theseus (and Minos) as part of fifth-century history. See also Constantakopoulou 2007.

<sup>38</sup> See Mills 1997, Armstrong 2006 *et al.*

son'.<sup>39</sup> The findings in this thesis concur with the suggestion that beneath the apparent heroism of Theseus lurks a darker side to this figure. Conversely, however, the image of Minos (as Theseus' arch-rival) that emerges from this study is one which is not as negative as other Athenian literature made him out to be. Taken together, these mixed perspectives on both protagonists are shown to destabilise the image of Athens as the only yardstick for so-called 'civilised behaviour'. The tension between the Cretan Minos and the Athenian Theseus also highlights the differences between the island and the mainland, considered next under the model of insularity.

This study also considers the questions of how multiple identities (and their potential) is represented in the works, and how, if at all, it is related to the paradigm of polarities (or antinomies), considered above. Where polarities appear to point to an opposition in characters and their actions, multiple identities indicate a greater multi-dimensionality and multiple spheres of reference in their portrayals. On this theme, portrayals of bovine imagery, and in particular, the construct of the Minotaur, half-human, half-beast, plays a pivotal role. The concept of multiple identities and how it relates to multiple spheres of meaning and interpretation, as well as its dramatic development will be considered in Chapters 4 to 6, which will also consider, in different contexts, what it is to be human or animal, or indeed, both.

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<sup>39</sup> Mills 1997: Foreword



### 1.10 Insularity

So far, the themes emerging from initial readings of the plays can be seen to exemplify and highlight differences between Crete and Athens, as well as between Crete the island and the Greek mainland. These elements include the tensions between Minos, the Cretan and Theseus, the Athenian; Minos' notoriety; Cretan women's strange sexual desires; and the supernatural goings-on on the island. Central to these elements is the idea of Crete-the-island, which provides the setting and the inspiration for the ways in which its characters and the various supernatural events are portrayed, and are inter-related. What it meant to be an island (which is one aspect of the model of insularity) was 'central for many key ideas in Greek history: safety, danger, prison, isolation, poverty, contempt, sea power...'.<sup>40</sup> Islands evoked notions of isolation and difference. They were understood as 'distinct, "closed" worlds, ideal locations for the extraordinary and the bizarre.'<sup>41</sup> These fifth-century perceptions of islands have been drawn on in scholarship to develop models of insularity. These have mainly been historiographical studies which explore how Athenian perceptions of islands are formulated as well as the relationship between the mainland of the ancient Greek world and its islands.<sup>42</sup> This thesis uses existing models of insularity in a different way by proposing that they are useful tools in the consideration of the treatment of Crete in drama, and specifically in Euripides'

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<sup>40</sup> Constantakopoulou 2007: 1

<sup>41</sup> Ibid: 2

<sup>42</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007 generally as an important recent study on insularity.

works, *The Cretans*, *Theseus*, and *Hippolytus*. However, unlike Constantakopoulou's monograph, *The Dance of the Islands*, which, as part of its explanation of the insularity model, singles out Crete and other larger islands as being atypical, this thesis will hope to demonstrate how the same model when tested on a dramatic island such as Crete continues to display many of the general principles of insularity that conform with her study of the other islands.<sup>43</sup>

Chapter 5 of this thesis brings together the analysis of identity and insularity, and considers the portrayals in the 'Cretan plays' of Pasiphae's affair with the bull, the Minotaur, Phaedra's lust for her stepson, and Daedalus' 'flight' as illustrations of bizarre episodes that serve to emphasize the notion of Crete as being distinct. In dramatic terms, Crete was the island setting *par excellence* for the supernatural and the bizarre. The distinct closed world of Crete provides an ideal location for the extraordinary where 'isolation and distinctiveness (...) are important features of insular life and essential elements to the construct of insularity'.<sup>44</sup>

In physical terms, the fact that Crete is an island with distinctive land- and seascapes, matters equally to its dramatic representations. It features in literature as home to the famous Mount Ida, believed to be where Zeus was born. Its rugged coastline and inhospitable shores and the dangers these posed to sailors were

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<sup>43</sup> Constantakopoulou 2007: 15. Crete, Sicily and Euboea have specifically been excluded on account of their size.

<sup>44</sup> Constantakopoulou 2007: 2-3; see also Faugères 1989: 89 'isolation is inscribed in the nature of an island'

highlighted from epic onwards.<sup>45</sup> Crete's physical location within the Hellenic world – 'at once central yet marginal', itself indicative of a paradox - also helped to shape the various Athenian perceptions of the island and how it came to be represented in fifth-century drama.<sup>46</sup>

Crete's physical distance from Athens also played a key role in how the island came to be viewed in literature as both physically and metaphorically distinct from Athens. It is referred to in Euripides as being '[n]early on the very fringes of Europe'.<sup>47</sup> As a location distant from Athens, Crete can be compared to the Scythian Tauris in Euripidean tragedy (*Iphigenia in Tauris*), 'said to be a very long way away from civilized Greece'.<sup>48</sup> Overall, in the course of Chapters 2 to 5, this thesis will assess the idea that such manifestations of the island's physical distance serve to emphasize the idea of an 'insular' Crete that is both physically and metaphorically a long way from Athens.

As this thesis also proposes, Crete's distinct nature appears as all-encompassing; that is to say, not only is the island distinguishable in terms of its landscape, events, characters, and gods and spirits, but it also appears to be represented metaphorically beyond the confines of its physical boundaries. This idea of 'a Crete on the Greek

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<sup>45</sup> E.g. see *Od.* 3.286-300

<sup>46</sup> In the words of Armstrong 2006:1

<sup>47</sup> Euripides *Theseus* f381

<sup>48</sup> Referring to *IT* 1325-6: Wright 2005: 169.

mainland' is explored in Chapter 2 where, in *Hippolytus*, the Cretan Phaedra appears to have 'transported' her Cretanism with her. This manifestation occurs in different ways: Phaedra's Cretan identity (and difference) is stressed both by her as well as by the Women of Troezen. Phaedra's associations with her native island are also seen as being the cause of her downfall in Troezen. So, this idea of 'a Crete on the mainland' appears to highlight the island's difference from Troezen. Additionally, the land- and seascapes of Troezen appear to eerily echo those on Crete. Cretan gods and spirits, including Phaedra's paternal grandfather, Zeus, are all invoked, and appear to be 'present' on Troezen. Taken together, Phaedra's Cretanism appears further to stress two potentially conflicting notions: first, of an opposition (manifested as differences) between mainland and island.<sup>49</sup> Secondly, we can discern the notion of an island 'present' on the mainland, where aspects of Crete are found on the Argolid mainland. This latter notion, of course, suggests the idea of commonalities between the two regions. As we shall consider in the next section, this same notion of commonalities between Crete and the mainland can also be considered in another context: namely, interconnectivity.

### 1.11 Interconnectivity

The importance of the model of interconnectivity, here, in the context of the display of bonds in common between Crete and Troezen, is considered in Chapter 2. There,

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<sup>49</sup> For the opposition between mainland and island occurring on the mainland, see e.g. Barrett 2001: 310 n. 763; also see Roisman 1999 on the parallels between the landscapes of Troezen and Crete. For different types of island (including Athens and Attica as 'islands') see Constantakopoulou 2007: 137-175.

in *Hippolytus*, Phaedra's journey to and permanent presence in Troezen could suggest the forging of ties between the island and the mainland. Furthermore, Phaedra's marriage to the Athenian Theseus appears to fortify these links between Troezen, Athens and Crete in this play.<sup>50</sup> As I propose in this thesis, the presence of characters, gods and spirits as well as landscapes familiar in and common to both Cretan and Troezenian contexts appears to further strengthen this sense of communality.

One striking feature found in *Hippolytus* that also occurs in the majority of the other 'Cretan plays' are the journeys undertaken by various protagonists between Crete, the mainland and the rest of the Greek world. The journeys on which particular emphasis is placed are as follows: Europa's arrival in Crete from Phoenicia (referred to in *Hypsipyle* f752g.19-26); Phaedra's voyage from Cretan shores to the shores of Attica in *Hippolytus*; Theseus' journey to Crete from Athens in *Theseus*; Polyidus' arrival in Crete from Corinth in *Polyidus*; and Atreus, Thyestes and Nauplius all of whom arrive on the island from Argos, in *Cretan Women*. These journeys (given both their relative ease and difficulties) appear to stress not so much Crete's isolation, but instead its connectedness with Athens and with the rest of the Greek world.

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<sup>50</sup> While the references to Troezen and Crete in that work are more obvious, I suggest that the Athenian connections are recalled through Theseus' mythological connections to the city as well as the references to Athens at *Hipp.* 760-1 and to the Attican port of Mounichia at 157 and 761 (see Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion).

Given these examples, modern, scholarly models of interconnectivity and interaction, can, I suggest, offer insights into the idea of 'commonness' shared by Crete and the rest of the ancient Greek world. The theories of interconnectivity developed in Constantakopoulou (2007), Malkin, Constantakopoulou and Panagopoulou (2009), and Malkin (2011), suggest the idea of an intensive network connecting the various regions of the Greek world based on commonality of myth-history, religion, trade and diplomacy. The models of interconnectivity are also built on exchanges of different kinds (such as trade and diplomacy) between Athens and the islands, including exchanges between Athens and Crete which played an important part in forging relations between mainland and island. The idea of 'Mediterraneanisation' as part of Athens' 'imperial network' with individual islands as allies, suggests intensive interconnectivity between the city and the rest of the Greek world.<sup>51</sup> While previous scholarship in this area has in the main, had a historiographical and sociological slant, it nevertheless provides for a consideration of the dramatic potential of the island. Against such a background, the textual evidence from the plays can then be related to fifth-century Athenian perceptions of geo-cultural relationships within the Greek world.

If notions of isolation and difference can be used to highlight 'distinct Cretan elements' that serve to alienate and to intensify the physical and perceptual

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<sup>51</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 61 ('The Aegean islands as an imperial network'), and generally pp. 62-89.

distances of Crete from Athens, then the theories of interconnectivity act in exactly the opposite direction. The theories make a strong case for that other aspect of insularity previously mentioned, that of a connectedness of an island such as Crete to Athens and the rest of the Greek world through an intensive network of exchanges through history, politics, trade, diplomacy and religion including the movement of people and ideas that was, in sum, part of the lived experiences of the fifth century.<sup>52</sup> For this reason, this thesis will equally consider the extent to which the network theories of interconnectivity might be investigated in the context of the extant plays and fragments, given that these connections are visible from the various sea-crossings made by the protagonists between Crete, Athens, and the other regions, for example. Furthermore, the connectedness to Athens by dint of the notion of interconnectivity, suggests one means by which the metaphor of a Crete 'in Athens' could be closer to actual lived experiences than imagined. The role of Theseus and how he is represented (in *Theseus*) will also be analysed given his status as an Athenian hero who ventures to Crete bringing civilized, 'Athenian' values to the island. Theseus can also be seen to forge and strengthen links between Crete and Athens in this way, as well as by his marriage to the Cretan Phaedra (in *Hippolytus*). If the mythical Theseus' role in history and politics is part of the lived experiences of fifth-century Athenians, then Crete's metaphorical presence there (as discerned in the dramatic works) could equally appear as part of that same material life.

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<sup>52</sup> Also see Malkin, Constantakopoulou and Panagopoulou (eds.) 2009, also Constantakopoulou 2007, Malkin 2011, 2012a: 2 for detailed discussions on interconnectivity.

In summary, then, this thesis contributes several new areas of research. First, it includes a detailed study of all known works by Euripides on the theme of Crete. Euripides' deployment of characters and stories from myth, his use of the darker aspects of Crete, as well as his formulations of identity, refine and deepen the poet's use of Crete as a dramatic island. Next, the evidence emerging from these works is considered in the contexts of conceptual models of insularity and interconnectivity, which, I suggest, offer useful insights with which to gauge the importance of islands and their portrayal in Euripides' works. Following on from this, the findings of this thesis offer a contribution to an analysis of fifth-century conceptions of islands and their cultural significance within the ancient Greek world.

Taken as a whole therefore, this thesis will attempt to add to the existing body of scholarship in Greek tragedy in the following ways: first, in exploring the interpretation of the evidence of fragmentary texts alongside complete works, to consider aspects such as modes of address and description, contexts of place, and the use of specific imagery (such as bovine imagery) in building up to the notion of Cretanism. Secondly, the thesis explores how a consideration of the notion of Cretanism can provide insights into the construct of identity, and what light this can in turn shed on the interplay between concepts of multiple identities, and of polarity. Finally, it considers how existing interpretations of the concept of islands can be



fruitfully nuanced and challenged on the basis of a study of Euripides' 'Cretan plays'.

### 1.12 Overview of chapters

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Following this introduction (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 presents a close reading of the one extant 'Cretan play', *Hippolytus*. In Chapter 2, the representation of Phaedra's 'Cretan-ness' is discussed in terms of the evocation of the physical landscapes, the sea, and gods and spirits that re-create elements of the island of the princess' origins, on Troezen. The fragmentary work, *The Cretans*, is given close scrutiny in Chapter 3, especially in terms of how aspects of Cretanism are shaped by the poet to illustrate the location of Crete and Cretan characters on an Athenian stage. A discussion of *Theseus* in Chapter 4 includes the analysis of textual evidence to consider key features of the work, including how Theseus, the Minotaur and the momentous event of the hero's arrival on the island are depicted. In particular, the significance of the portrayal of these elements on Athenian dramatic space is considered in terms of the Cretan-Athenian dynamic. Chapter 5 considers how the evidence arising out of textual analyses can be usefully considered in terms the models of insularity and interconnectivity. The chapter proposes that Euripides represented the island as a paradigm, emphasizing two potentially contradictory notions: Crete as an island, perceived as distant from Athens, while, at the same time, being intensely connected to the mainland and to the rest of Greece. The final chapter, Chapter 6, provides an overview of the various

works discussed in the previous chapters and considers at greater length Athenian perspectives on Crete as well as Euripides' construct of the island. The conclusion here is that Crete was indeed depicted as distant and different from Athens, in a series of sometimes striking and sometimes subtle ways. In Chapter 6, I also go on to develop the idea that Euripides' plays reflect the plurality of Athenian thought evinced in terms of connections between different regions of the Greek world. In the 'Cretan plays' this plurality can be considered in terms of the models of interconnectivity that serve to reinforce the links between Crete and Athens. Additionally, as we shall see, the role of the former as a foil for the latter appears more marked than the impressions gleaned from initial readings of the 'Cretan plays' might indicate. Euripides' Crete is above all a paradox, 'at once central yet marginal'; both isolated from the centre, yet 'within' its heart; both bizarre yet familiar; both an island, as well as very much part of the mainland; part of lived experiences, as well as a fantasy.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> See Armstrong 2006: 1

## Appendix 1

### The cycle of Cretan myths

#### A summary:<sup>54</sup>

Europa was the great granddaughter of Io and daughter of Phoenix or Agenor, king of Phoenicia, and Telephassa; her brother was Cadmus.<sup>55</sup> Europa was spotted by Zeus who desired her. The god disguised himself as a bull to get to the maiden while she was gathering flowers in a meadow.<sup>56</sup> Deceived by the animal's beauty and gentleness, she climbed upon his back, whereupon the bull raced off over the sea with her. Arriving in Crete, Zeus satisfied his passion for Europa, and had three sons by her: Minos, Rhadamanthys, and Sarpedon.<sup>57</sup> Afterwards she married

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<sup>54</sup> Where relevant, the plays (including fragments) by Euripides which have a bearing on particular stories are indicated. The versions provided here are by no means the only ones of the stories; given that there were no fixed body of stories that playwrights, including Euripides, drew from. In the main, however, the most popular versions follow the story-lines as detailed here, at least in outline, although often varying in detail (these have been highlighted in the footnotes, where possible). The summary has been compiled based mainly on Armstrong 2006 and Collard and Cropp 2008a and 2008b.

<sup>55</sup> References to Europa are found in Euripides *The Cretans* f472.1-3; *Hypsipyle* f2752g.18-23; *Phrixus B* f820.a; also in *Il.* 14.321-2; Herodotus 1.2; 4.45; Simonides *Europa* (mentioned in PMG f562); Stesichorus *Europa* (attested by the scholion on Euripides *Phoenissae* 670); Prazilla (5<sup>th</sup>-century Sikyonian poetess mentioned in Pausanias 3.13.5); Aeschylus *Cares* f99; Hesiod *Catalogue of Women* 90-92; the Hesiodic *Battle of Frogs and Mice* 78-80; Bacchylides *Victory Odes* 1.124; Lycophron *Europa* 1296-1301; Ap. Rhod. *Argonautica* 4.163; Theophrastus *Enquiry into Plants* i.9.5; Palaephatus *Peri Apiston* 15; Apollodorus *The Library* 3.1.1; Moschus *Europa, Idylls* 11.37-62; Hyginus *Fabulae* 19, 178; Nonnus *Dionysiaca* 1.353, 2.693-5, 35.384. The only reference to Cadmus in Euripides is the fragment *Cadmus*, attested 'in the late classical commentary of "Probus" on Virgil, *Eclogues*' (only one possible fragment, f488, survives; see Collard and Cropp 2008a: 491).

<sup>56</sup> This version is referred to in the scholion on *Il.* 12.292 which cites Hesiod f140 MW and Bacchylides f10 SM as its sources. The most famous extant version of this story remains the much later Moschus *Europa*.

<sup>57</sup> *Il.* 14.321-2; Hes. *Catalogue of Women* 90-2; Herodotus 1.173

Asterios (or Asterion),<sup>58</sup> king of Crete, who reared her children. Minos subsequently ruled as king of Crete.<sup>59</sup>

Europa's father sent Cadmus to search for her, but he never found her (*Cadmus*)<sup>60</sup>.

When in his wandering he came to Delphi, Apollo commanded him to abandon the search and go and found Thebes instead.<sup>61</sup>

Minos married Pasiphae, daughter of the Sun (Helios).<sup>62</sup> She bore him Ariadne and Phaedra<sup>63</sup> (also other children in various traditions, for example, Glaucus [*Polyidus*; see below]). Minos claimed the kingship of Crete, asserting that it was the gods' gift to him.<sup>64</sup> Minos said that Poseidon would send him a confirmatory sign to legitimise his kingship. He then prayed to Poseidon to send him a bull from the sea, vowing to sacrifice it in return. A magnificent animal appeared, and Minos took the throne; but he kept the bull and sacrificed another.

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<sup>58</sup> See Apollodorus *The Library* 3.1.1-2 (trans. Frazer 1921:301 and n.3). Although Apollodorus' was a much later fourth-century version, it has been included here in the absence of fifth-century versions, and in order to provide a fuller account of the story.

<sup>59</sup> Numerous early sources refer to Minos: *Od.* 11.322; 11.568-71; 17.523; 19.178-9; *Il.* 13.450-1; 14.321-2; Hesiod *Theogony* 947-9; *Catalogue of Women* 90-92; Euripides *Phrixus B* f820.b; Pindar *Paen* IV; Plato *Minos*; Apollodorus *The Library* 3.1.1 (as well as the later Plutarch *Life of Theseus* 16.3).

<sup>60</sup> Euripides *Cadmus* (See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 491).

<sup>61</sup> Eumelus; the archaic poet's *Europeia* is said to feature Cadmus' search for Europa; the story also occurs in Herodotus 4.147 and the scholion on Ap. Rhod. *Argonautica* 3.1179.

<sup>62</sup> The first known references to Pasiphae's family tree and to Pasiphae as Ariadne's mother occur in the third-century Apollonius Rhodius *Argonautica* esp. 3.999, 1076; the first references to Pasiphae as the child of the sun come in Bacchylides *Ode* 17.50 and in the fourth-century Isocrates *Helen* 27; also Apollodorus *The Library* 3.1.2-3.

<sup>63</sup> The first known references to Ariadne and Phaedra occur in *Il.* 18.590-2 and *Od.* 11.321-5; Pasiphae was also the subject of comedies, for example, Alcaeus *Pasiphae*.

<sup>64</sup> For the suggestion that Minos acquired the throne by deceit, see the later Apollodorus. *The Library* 3.1.1-4

An angry Poseidon punished Minos by afflicting his wife, Pasiphae, with a lust to mate with the bull.<sup>65</sup> She persuaded the exiled Athenian, Daedalus - master builder and craftsman - to make her an artificial cow into which she climbed in order to deceive her beloved bull into thinking her an appropriate mate.<sup>66</sup> The trick worked and the bull mounted the decoy to impregnate the queen. The offspring of this union, half man, half bull, was called Minotaur (also called Asterios).<sup>67</sup> Minos, on discovering his wife's actions and the existence of the creature, commanded Daedalus to build a Labyrinth in a vain attempt to conceal the product of such extraordinary lust from the world. The Minotaur was fed on human flesh (*The Cretans*).<sup>68</sup> Here Pasiphae's story ends, probably with a suicide or death by imprisonment in a subterranean prison.<sup>69</sup>

When Minos conquered Athens it occurred to him to use the Minotaur as a means to avenge the death of his son Androgeus in Athens.<sup>70</sup> He demanded a regular sacrifice from the Athenians of seven youths and seven maidens to be fed to the Minotaur as

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<sup>65</sup> Pasiphae's story is alluded to in Hesiod f145 MW.

<sup>66</sup> Bacchylides fragment *Ode* 26 refers to Pasiphae's request to Daedalus (presumably to build her a wooden cow); the first extant source referring to the wooden cow occurs in the (fourth century) Palaephatus *Peri Apiston* 2; the story is also summarized in Apollodorus *The Library* 3.15.8; *Epitome* 1.11-15; Hyginus *Fabulae* 40.4.

<sup>67</sup> According to the later Apollodorus *The Library* 3.1.3-4; the name 'Asterios' is interesting in that it was also the name of the king of Crete to whom Europa was given away in marriage; the name 'Asterios' given to both the Cretan king and the Minotaur could have been inventions by Apollodorus, perhaps to stress a connection (admittedly distant) between them.

<sup>68</sup> Euripides *The Cretans* (see Collard and Cropp 2008a: 529-55)

<sup>69</sup> See Euripides *The Cretans* f472e.45-9 on Minos' sentencing of Pasiphae.

<sup>70</sup> Mills 1997: 13 and n. 46; the legend may have already been developed and in place at least from the seventh century and well-known throughout the Greek world; cf. Hesiod f144-7, Bacchylides *Poem* 17, and Sophocles' *Theseus* f73; evidence from Athenian vases corroborates the view that the legend was well-known from early history.

atonement for the murder.<sup>71</sup> When it came to the third sacrifice, King Aegeus' adopted son Theseus (*Aegeus*)<sup>72</sup> was one of those Athenians to whom the lot fell, and he set off for Crete with his companions, determined to establish his heroism and to liberate his city from Minos' cruelty (*Theseus*).<sup>73</sup> When Theseus arrived at the palace of Knossos, Ariadne, Minos' elder daughter, fell in love with the hero and gave him a sword and thread to trace his way back out of Daedalus' maze (where he was being interned) once he had killed the monster.<sup>74</sup> After slaying the Minotaur, Theseus left Crete secretly along with Ariadne and the rescued Athenian youths and maidens. Although he benefited from her help, and probably promised to make her his wife, Theseus took Ariadne only as far as the island of Dia or Naxos (or Delos),<sup>75</sup> where, unmindful of his vows, he abandoned her as she slept.<sup>76</sup> Dionysus found the forlorn maiden, took her as his consort and set her crown in the heavens. Theseus returned to Athens<sup>77</sup> and later married Phaedra.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> See Plato *Phaedo* 58b.10 on the tribute, and Theseus' role in ending it.

<sup>72</sup> Euripides *Aegeus* (see Collard and Cropp 2008a: 3-11)

<sup>73</sup> Euripides *Theseus* (See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 415-27). See also f382 for the Herdsman's dramatic description of the hero's arrival on Cretan shores (Collard and Cropp 2008a: 420-1).

<sup>74</sup> Nestor relates the story of Theseus and Ariadne to Menelaus in *Cypria* (Proclus, *Chrestomathia* 1 = *Cypria* 1); see also Armstrong 2006: 8 n.21; also Apollodorus *Epitome* 1.6-9.

<sup>75</sup> See also Frazer 1921: 136 n.2 for the suggestion that it was Diodorus Siculus who later identified Dia with Naxos; see also Apollodorus *Epitome* 1.9-11 for the alternative version that they arrived on Lemnos. For the significance of Delos as the island sacred to Apollo see *Od.* 6.162; for the role of Delos in Theseus' story see Fearn (2007) on Bacchylides 17, esp. pp. 252-3.

<sup>76</sup> See Armstrong 2006: 8 n.20 for an alternative version in which Ariadne was already married (to Dionysus) when the hero arrived in Crete, and so it was she, not Theseus, who 'sinned'; cf. Barrett 2001 [1964] on *Hipp.* 339.

<sup>77</sup> Theseus' return to Athens was a theme popular in fifth-century art and the subject of Bacchylides dithyramb, Bacchyl. 18 (Collard and Cropp 2008a: 5).

<sup>78</sup> Mythographic summaries from Diodorus 4.61.4-5, Apollodorus *Epitome* 1.6-9 and the account in Plutarch *Life of Theseus* 17-23 provide the basis for these accounts; aspects of these stories are said to occur in the 6th-century epic *Theseis* (now lost, whose authorship is uncertain) and the 5<sup>th</sup>- century Athenian mythographer Pherecydes (*FGH* 3 f148). 'The fragmentary hypothesis in *P. Oxy* 4640 (...) confirms that it was the subject of Euripides' *Theseus*.' (Collard and Cropp 2008a:415-6). *P.Oxy* 2452, tentatively ascribed to Sophocles *Theseus* in *TrGF* 4, is said to be on the same subject. Euripides' version is also parodied in Aristophanes' *Wasps* f385-6; works of the same title by Achaëus and Heraclides are said to have been produced around the same time (*TrGF*

On his marriage to Phaedra, Theseus was attacked by the Amazons, and Hippolyta (or Antiope) his previous wife, was killed<sup>79</sup> (the marriage of Phaedra to Theseus could be viewed as part of a political settlement made between Crete and Athens to untangle the web of mutual offence after the deaths of Androgeus, the Athenian youths, and the Minotaur).<sup>80</sup> The young queen, however, fell in love with the wild and impossible Hippolytus, son of Theseus by the Amazon, Hippolyta (or Antiope).<sup>81</sup>

Unable to either tame or seduce him, and fearing for her reputation, Phaedra accused Hippolytus of rape, so causing Theseus to direct against his own son a powerful curse granted to him by his father Poseidon. Phaedra committed suicide; as a result, Theseus invoked the curse which took the form of a savage bull emerging from the sea, which mauled Hippolytus to death (*Hippolytus Kaluptomenos* [*Hippolytus Veiled*] and *Hippolytus Stephanephoros* [*Hippolytus Garlanded*]).<sup>82</sup>

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20, 37) (Ibid: 417); Apart from Sophocles' fragmentary *Phaedra*, only Lycophron's *Phaedra* (third century) is known (though only by its title); Seneca's surviving *Phaedra* is the only other work featuring the Cretan princess.

<sup>79</sup> Ap. *Epitome* 1.16-19; Diod. Sic. 4.28.2; Plut. *Thes.* 28.2

<sup>80</sup> The political implications of their marriage could, I suggest, have been a fifth-century perspective.

<sup>81</sup> The account of Phaedra's unhappy love for Hippolytus is thought to be unlikely to be older than the sixth century: see Mills 1997: 189 & n.9 cf. Barrett 2001 [1964]: 9; Phaedra's shameless nature is referred to in Aristophanes *Frogs* 1043; also in Apollodorus *Epitome* 1.16-19.

<sup>82</sup> Euripides *Hippolytus Kaluptomenos* (See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 466-89). Mills 1997: 190 offers the plausible suggestion that the story of Hippolytus became familiar in Attica when interest in Theseus himself was increasing, and around the time when the stories of this newly-elected Athenian hero's travels around the Saronic Gulf from Troezen were starting to be of interest in Athens, cf. Herter 1940: 273-8; Reckford 1972: 414-16; Barrett 2001: 3-5; there is no evidence for the Hippolytus story before the sixth- or at least the mid-fifth centuries (see Mills 1997: 189; Collard and Cropp 2008a: 466).

In the next generation, Aerope,<sup>83</sup> daughter of Catreus (Minos' son) and niece of Ariadne and Phaedra, continued 'the tradition of Cretan sin'.<sup>84</sup> Dismissed from her father's house for having sex before marriage with a servant, she was sent to Nauplius in Euboea to be executed for her misdemeanour.<sup>85</sup> Nauplius did not carry out this instruction, however, and Aerope went on to marry Pleisthenes (*Pleisthenes*),<sup>86</sup> or Atreus, giving birth to Agamemnon and Menelaus. Atreus and his brother, Thyestes, were rivals for the throne of Mycenae, the claim to which rested on the possession of a golden lamb. Thyestes seduced Aerope and persuaded her to hand the lamb over to him. Plotting his revenge for this and for his brother's adultery with his wife, Atreus feigned a desire for reconciliation with Thyestes and invited him to dinner. There, he served up Thyestes' own children (in some versions, these children were those born to Thyestes and Aerope), and the sun recoiled in horror at the sight, retreating back to the east.<sup>87</sup> Aerope's final fate is

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<sup>83</sup> The version of the summary here follows the tradition in which Aerope was Pasiphae's grand-daughter, however, see Collard 2005: 55 for the suggestion of an alternative version where Aerope is Pasiphae's *mother*. Apart from *Cretan Women*, references to Aerope also occur in Euripides *Electra* 720-3. References to Aerope in early sources are scarce: scholia on the *Il.* 1.7 state that Homer makes Agamemnon the son of Atreus and Aerope whereas in Hesiod (f194 MW), Agamemnon is the son of Aerope and Pleisthenes; see also Gantz 1993: 552-3; Aerope is also thought to have been the subject of plays by Sophocles (*Atreus*, *Thyestes*, *Thyestes in Sicyon*), Agathon (*Aerope*) and the younger Karkinos (*Aerope?*) among others. See also Armstrong 2006: 12 & n.39; Collard and Cropp 2008a: 519.

<sup>84</sup> Armstrong 2006: 7

<sup>85</sup> Aerope's story is also referred to in the scholiast on Sophocles *Ajax* 1295-7 (where 'Euripides' plot is summarized with extreme concision' according to Collard and Cropp 2008a: 516); see Jebb 1913:193; Nauck 1964: 502. Apollodorus 3.2.1-2, 5 provide alternative versions, with no sexual wrongdoing on Aerope's part.

<sup>86</sup> Euripides *Pleisthenes* (See Collard and Cropp 2008b: 79-87)

<sup>87</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 517; the story of the 'feast' is recounted in Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1582-1602; it is possibly alluded to in Euripides *Cretan Women* f467 (Collard and Cropp 2008a: 526-7).



unclear, though it is unlikely that Atreus would have treated her with lenience

(*Cretan Women*).<sup>88</sup>

In another branch of the myth, Glaucus was the son of Minos and Pasiphae

(*Polyidus*).<sup>89</sup> Glaucus, son of Minos and Pasiphae, fell into a storage jar full of honey

while playing. His parents could not find him, so they inquired from Apollo as to

his whereabouts, and the god answered them with a portent, a colour-changing calf,

which eventually led to the discovery of Glaucus and to the restoration of his life

with the help of the seer, Polyidus.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Euripides *Cretan Women* (See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 516-27). This section is based mainly on Armstrong's (2006) excellent 'condensed account' on pp. 5-7 & n.17; also adapted from Andrews (1969) and Collard and Cropp (2008a and 2008b).

<sup>89</sup> Euripides *Polyidus* (See Collard and Cropp 2008b:89-105); early references to Polyidus and aspects of the story occur variously in *Il.* 13.663-72; the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* f136.5-7; Aeschylus f116; Sophocles f395, Aristophanes *Polyidus*; Palaephatus 27; Hyginus *Fabulae* 136; Apollodorus 3.3.17-20 (see also Frazer (trans.) 1921: 310-3 and notes 2-4). Plutarch *Moralia* 132e.

<sup>90</sup> Adapted from Collard and Cropp 2008b: 93; see also Apollodorus *The Library* 3.2.2-3.3.1.

## Appendix 2

### An approximate chronology of extant plays and fragments by Euripides with Cretan references.<sup>91</sup>

1. *Cretan Women* (c. 438 BC)
2. *The Cretans* (before 431 BC)
3. *Aegeus* (before 431 BC)
4. *Hippolytus Kaluptomenos* (before 431 BC)
5. *Hippolytus Stephanephoros* (428 BC)
6. *Theseus* (before 422 BC)
7. *Phrixus B* (middle to late 420s BC)
8. *Polyidus* (after 414 BC)
9. *Hypsipyle* (411-407 BC)
10. *Cadmus* (unknown)

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<sup>91</sup> The list is adapted from Cantarella 1964: 157-8 and Collard and Cropp 2008a: xxx-xxxii; the listing of the plays in the order they appear in Appendix 2 follows a relative chronology based mainly on Collard and Cropp 2008a-b; it is not exhaustive.

## Chapter 2

### Crete and Cretan elements in Euripides' *Hippolytus*

#### 2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I considered some different ways in which Euripides appears to have adapted the myths in relation to Cretan characters in his plays. In this chapter, I consider one of those adaptations in particular by exploring the character of Phaedra. Selected passages from *Hippolytus Stephanephorus* are considered in this chapter in order to establish the themes that emerge from the play in terms of the portrayals of Crete and Cretans. (In this study, *Hippolytus* refers to Euripides' second version of the story, *Hippolytus Stephanephorus*.<sup>92</sup>) I begin by analyzing selected passages which contain direct, explicit references to Phaedra and to Crete. I then consider passages in the play that contain more implicit, nuanced references to the island. The many references to Phaedra, the Cretan princess, and to features such as gods, spirits and landscape which are specifically connected with Crete, suggest the various ways in which Euripides appears to draw on Cretan imagery in *Troezen*. Subsequent chapters will similarly consider the different ways by which

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<sup>92</sup> Unless otherwise specified, all references in this chapter are to Euripides' second version of the story, *Hippolytus Stephanephorus*, 'Hippolytus Garlanded' (c. 428BC), rather than to the first (fragmentary) version, *Hippolytus Kaluptomenos*, 'Hippolytus Veiled' (also c. 428BC). For the passages in Greek from *Hippolytus Stephanephoros*, the *Oxford Classical Text (OCT)* (Diggle 1984) was used. In cases in Chapter 2 where the Kovacs/Loeb (1995) translation was used, these were checked back with the *OCT* version; where differences between the two texts arose, these were commented upon *ad loc.* as necessary. See Chapter 1 for a fuller explanation on the choice of translations etc.

Cretan imagery manifests itself in other works by Euripides such as *The Cretans*, *Theseus*, and *Cretan Women*.

Why undertake a detailed analysis of passages from *Hippolytus*? First, it is the only Cretan play of Euripides to have survived intact. It therefore, provides a unique opportunity to explore aspects of Euripides' treatment of Crete in a non-fragmentary context. Secondly, while the play is set in Troezen and not Crete, it makes the protagonist's Cretan origins obvious right from the start; Phaedra's Cretan origins are made known to the spectator/reader from line 156.<sup>93</sup> The narrative that can be gleaned in *Hippolytus* is as follows: Phaedra is the daughter of Minos, the legendary Cretan king.<sup>94</sup> Following in her sister Ariadne's footsteps, she falls in love with and later marries Theseus.<sup>95</sup> As far as can be surmised, Phaedra first arrives in Athens upon her marriage to Theseus, and then flees with him to Troezen.<sup>96</sup> Theseus rules over Troezen (where he was born) with Phaedra as his queen. Although we know from Euripides' *Heraclidae* and *Hecuba* (discussed later in this chapter) that Theseus has two sons, the version with Phaedra named as the mother of Theseus' sons appears for the first time here in *Hippolytus*.<sup>97</sup> So, in this version of Euripides', the

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<sup>93</sup> See Chapter 3 where I discuss the fragmentary work, *The Cretans*, where all the characters are Cretan; however, that work survives only in fragmentary form. In any case, as I suggest in Chapters 2 and 3, Cretan characters in Crete and on the mainland are nuanced differently. The anomaly between Crete (the island) and Troezen (part of the mainland) are considered in Chapters 3, 5 and 6.

<sup>94</sup> E.g. see Gantz 1993: xxxvii, 270; Hard 2008: 701.

<sup>95</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 466-7. It has been suggested that their marriage was, possibly, part of a political settlement made between Crete and Athens to untangle the web of mutual offence after the deaths of Minos' son, Androgeus, the Athenian youths, and the Minotaur.

<sup>96</sup> This can be gleaned from Aphrodite's speech in *Hippolytus* 34-6.

<sup>97</sup> See e.g. Miller 2005: 83 n. 78; Gantz 1993: 269 and n. 11- see also Gantz 1993: 283-4 who suggests that both Demophon and Akamas were Antiope's children under 'an older tradition and were

sons of Phaedra can be assumed to be half-Cretan – an important element in terms of this study, as discussed later.

Some key questions that will be addressed in this chapter in terms of the Phaedra character in *Hippolytus* are: questions of origins and implications of her provenance; Phaedra's relocation and displacement; implications of distance between Crete and Troezen, and of the travels and ties between these various regions. Also considered are some possible effects of the use of recurring key imagery in the work.

I begin by suggesting that the poet evokes Crete through the references to Phaedra's origins – the princess who hailed from a distant island. The notions of islands and islanders were important in Greek thought, suggesting two contrasting notions: distance and separation from the mainland, on the one hand, and conversely, intimate ties with it, suggested by sailings to and fro, and family ties on the mainland, on the other hand. Also, as Constantakopoulou proposes, islands were seen as both 'real' as well as 'a location in the imagination'.<sup>98</sup> I hope to explore both these notions in my study, and suggest that the poet evokes Crete in different ways in order to suggest both physical and metaphysical locations; the island is constructed as a concrete place, as well as a part of the cultural imagination.

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transferred to Phaidra at a later point.' This version, with the two boys named as sons of Phaedra, can also be found in the later Apollodorus *Epitome* 1.16-19.

<sup>98</sup> Constantakopoulou 2007: 9

## 2.2 Allusions to Crete in Troezen

In *Hippolytus*, references can be found to Crete and Cretans in five or so passages (155-60 and 752-63 together; 337-43; 362-430; and 715-721). I analyze these, in the main, in the order that they occur in the play.<sup>99</sup> The passages suggest two main themes that emerge in relation to Cretanism: allusions to the myths of the Cretan royal family, and references to sea-related imagery evoking the sea, ships and sailing. These are considered in greater detail below.

### 2.2.1 Lines 155-60 and 752-63

I begin with a close reading of lines 155-160 in which the first references to Phaedra's Cretan origins are found. Indeed, Crete is referred to for the first time in the play, in these lines. Of course, we note from the opening lines that the Cretan Phaedra is not in Crete, the island of her birth, but in Troezen, on mainland Greece. So, the focus in this section is twofold: Phaedra's origins in Crete, and her relocation in Troezen, and the implications of each of these situations, both specific to her as well as more generally.

In this passage, (the play's *parados*) the Chorus is agitated by news of Phaedra's illness and speculates on its cause: is it bad news that has arrived from Crete?

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<sup>99</sup> However, I consider passages 155-160 and 752-63 together, given their thematic links in terms of sea-related imagery.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἢ ναυβάτας τις ἔπλευ- 155  
σεν Κρήτας ἔξορμος ἀνὴρ  
λιμένα τὸν εὖξεινότατον ναύταις  
φήμαν πέμπων βασιλεί-  
αι, λύπαι δ' ὑπὲρ παθέων  
εὐναία δέδεταί ψυχά; 160

Chorus:

Or has some mariner from Crete  
put in at the harbor most hospitable to sailors bearing  
news to the queen, so that her soul is bound bedfast in  
grief over her misfortunes?<sup>100</sup>

Lines 155-60 are part of the first choral ode (which runs from 122–169) sung by the Women of Troezen where they consider various possible causes for Phaedra's state of delirium. The mariner brings Phaedra news from her home. Phaedra has left the island of her birth, her family and her past on Crete. The queen is now here in Troezen but it appears that the mariner from her home in Crete has tracked her down. They suggest here that the Cretan sailor has anchored close by, somewhere on the mainland (although not at any specifically named port). The harbour is significant in the play as being the first point of contact made by a Cretan on arrival on the mainland. Indeed, it represents the very first direct link seen in the work between Crete and the mainland. Later at 760, we find out that Phaedra's first port of call on the Greek mainland was at the Athenian port of Mounichia, possibly the same port. Commentators such as Halleran and Barrett suggest that this other

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<sup>100</sup> Unless stated otherwise, all translations are from the Kovacs/Loeb version 1995. εὐναία (*eunaia*) normally refers to 'the marriage bed' (*LSJ*:285, εὐναῖος, suggests this). The idea of being bound/tied recurs in 762-3.

harbour referred to in this work, λιμένα τὸν εὐξεινότατον ναύταις, ‘the harbour most hospitable to sailors’, at 157, was also Mounichia, which is the older harbour of Attica, more ancient than Piraeus (we note the reference to it again at 760).<sup>101</sup> A connection between that more ancient mainland port and Crete could, I suggest, indicate that ancient ties between the two regions are being implied (a feature detailed below).

At least two points arise on the reference to the named and unnamed harbours: as Barrett also suggests, the ship from Crete could have first sailed into Athens, and not finding Phaedra there, it could have subsequently sailed on to Troezen in search of her. The counter argument that Barrett also makes is that in referring to the port, the Chorus of Troezenian women would naturally think of their local Troezenian harbour, and so we find Euripides making them do so, while the poet himself ‘thinks only of his beloved Athens’.<sup>102</sup> In either case, notions of the long sea crossings from Crete to the mainland are suggested, and as a result, links are implied between the different regions that the ship connects.

In addition, there is perhaps a deliberate ambiguity at work here in not specifically naming the harbour at 157; it perhaps provides a counterpoint to Cretan harbours (known from Odysseus’ *Lying Tales* as being treacherous and so- inhospitable) when

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<sup>101</sup> See e.g. Halleran 1995: 164 n. 155-60; also Barrett 2001 [1964] 191, 310.

<sup>102</sup> Barrett 2001 [1964]: 191.



compared to harbours on the mainland that appear to be 'most hospitable to sailors'.<sup>103</sup> The contrasts between Crete and the mainland appear to be emphasised again.

While the Cretan princess' sea crossing from the island of her origins to the mainland is also conjured up,<sup>104</sup> this journey to Troezen is perhaps mirrored by the course taken by the Cretan mariner – he too has come on a similar journey, this time in search of her; these parallels again appear to emphasize the ties between Crete and the mainland. Phaedra is already very much present in Troezen, even inescapably so, with her 'soul' being 'bound bedfast' on its shores (159-60). The mariner's crossing suggests a long journey involving the traversing of great distances from Crete to Attica (possibly undertaken in a substantial vessel strongly built to negotiate the waters between the two regions). So, several features emerge from this passage: first the notion that the two regions are separated by a great distance.<sup>105</sup> Secondly, the allusion to the points of departure (Crete) and arrival ('the harbor' on the mainland) at 752-762 serves to juxtapose the island and the mainland – ostensibly, two very different land masses. Thirdly, both the arrival of the mariner as well as Phaedra's presence 'at the harbor' perhaps suggests the establishment of a link between the two regions. It could be suggested here that Euripides is perhaps

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<sup>103</sup> E.g. see *Od.* 3.288; 14.199; 19.172-9; where the treacherous seas and coasts, rugged mountains and inclement weather of Crete are emphasised as features of the island.

<sup>104</sup> See *Hipp.* 752-762

<sup>105</sup> The Chorus' descriptions of Phaedra's crossing (esp. at 752-762) appear to emphasise this distance.

eliding the difference between the two regions, contrasting them, yet also possibly blurring divisions between them.

In lines 752-763, we find precise descriptions given by the Chorus of the arrival of Phaedra's ship on Attica (the vessel is moored at a specific port, Mounichia)<sup>106</sup> which suggest the features met previously - of great distances travelled, of the contrasts between Crete and Attica, and the forming of bonds between the two regions which the tying of a mooring cable could imply. These references also provide a link between the two passages (especially lines 157 and 760):

ὦ λευκόπτερε Κρησία	752
πορθμῖς, ἃ διὰ πόντιον	
κῦμ' ἀλίκτυπον ἄλμας	
ἐπόρευσας ἐμὴν ἄνασσαν ὀλβίων ἀπ' οἴκων	
κακονυμφοτάταν ὄνασιν·	
ἧ γὰρ ἀπ' ἀμφοτέρων οἱ Κρησίας <τ'> ἐκ γᾶς δυσόρνις	757-759
ἔπτατο κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας Μουνίχου τ' ἀ-	
κταῖσιν ἐκδήσαντο πλεκτὰς πεισμάτων ἀρ-	
χὰς ἐπ' ἀπείρου τε γᾶς ἔβασαν.	763

O Cretan vessel with wing of white canvas, that ferried  
my lady over the loud-sounding sea wave from her house  
of blessedness, a boon that was no boon to make an  
unhappy bride: it was with evil omen, at the start of her  
journey and its end, that she sped from the land of Crete  
to glorious Athens, where they tied the plaited ends of the  
mooring cable on Munichus' shore and trod the mainland.

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<sup>106</sup> See Kovacs 1995: 199 and note b: 'Munichus was the eponymous hero of the Athenian port of Munichion'. See also Ellinger 2009: 22-3; Artemis' temple at Mounichia (*Artemis Mounychia*), where the goddess has command over the entrance to the port.

Apart from conjuring up (and giving narrative space to) Phaedra's journey from Crete to Troezen via Mounichia, the passage reveals another theme –the use of sea imagery:<sup>107</sup> the Chorus sing the second *stasimon* at 732-75 in which they express their desire to escape, echoing Phaedra's own 'escape' from Crete (at 757-9). The link between Crete and Mounichia is spelt out here. So, the reference to Crete that forms part of the Chorus' song here could be seen to highlight four elements: a sea journey (Phaedra's journey to Troezen upon her marriage to Theseus), particular geographical locales (Crete, Athens, Troezen), the marriage between Phaedra and Theseus, and the implication the Chorus makes of an unhappy outcome from that union, which will culminate in the princess' death.<sup>108</sup>

The κακονυμφοτάταν ὄνασιν in line 756 specifies the boat bringing Phaedra to Athens.<sup>109</sup> The Chorus suggests that the marriage was doomed from the beginning, with ἀμφοτέρων in 757 implying that the omens were bad, δυσόρνις (759), *both* in Crete and in Athens.<sup>110</sup> The reference to Phaedra's crossing in a ship could itself be seen as an evil omen: as Halleran comments, Greeks were particularly sensitive to

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<sup>107</sup> In broader terms, the whole passage (esp. 732-762) is replete with references to sea-related imagery e.g. 735-9: *over the sea swell to shore of the Adriatic and the waters of the Eridanus, where into the deep-blue wave* ( ἄρθείην δ' ἐπὶ πόντιον κῦμ' <ἐς> τὰς Ἀδρινῆας ἀκτὰς Ἡριδανοῦ θ' ὕδωρ, ... οἶδμα ); 743-5: *the lord of the sea forbids sailors further passage in the deep-blue mere* ( Ἐσπερίδων δ' ἐπὶ μηλόσπορον ἀκτὰν ἀνύσαιμι τᾶν αἰοιδῶν, ἵν' ὁ ποντομέδων πορφυρέας λίμνας ναύταις ... ); 752-4: *O Cretan vessel with wing of white canvas, that ferried my lady over the loud-sounding sea wave* ( ὦ λευκόπτερε Κρησία πορθυίς, ἃ διὰ πόντιον κῦμ' ἀλικτύπον ἄλμας... ); 761-2: *mooring cable* ( ἀρχὰς ); 767: *sinking* ( ὑπέραντλος ).

<sup>108</sup> See Halleran 1995: 211 n. 732-75 for an in-depth analysis of these four elements.

<sup>109</sup> See Barrett 2001 [1964]: 307 "the boat's bringing Ph. to Athens was 'a gratification (of Ph.) which involved extreme misfortune connected with marriage.'"

<sup>110</sup> Or in Troezen. This is assuming that the story in *Hippolytus* follows the version where Phaedra first arrives in Athens upon her marriage to Theseus, then flees to Troezen with him.

‘omens surrounding any momentous event, here portrayed as the departure and arrival of the ship’ from Crete.<sup>111</sup> However, despite the bad omens, one effect of this marriage is that it has ‘linked’ Crete, Athens and Troezen. Phaedra’s marriage to Theseus on the mainland and her journey from Crete to Attica where the vessel has been secured at an Athenian port, suggest that, metaphorically at least, permanent bonds between island and mainland have been forged.

Ships and sea-travel are important features in Cretanism. The references to ships and sailing, found both in 155-7 and 752-63, further serve not only to emphasize sea crossings, but also highlight the starting and ending points of the respective journeys of those who traverse the waters; both Phaedra and the mariner have crossed from Crete to a point on the mainland, a harbour (157) or an Athenian port (760-1).<sup>112</sup> One possible effect on the audience in naming a port of arrival in this way is to make them aware of the port of departure, thus suggesting here the long journey undertaken by Phaedra (and the messenger) between the two points of Crete and Mounichia.<sup>113</sup> A great distance travelled between the two regions could also be implied here.

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<sup>111</sup> Halleran 1995: 214 n. 759; see also *Thucydides* 6.32 on the customary prayers offered before the Athenians launched their ships on the Sicilian Expedition.

<sup>112</sup> See e.g. Halleran 1995: 164 n. 155-60; also Barrett 2001 [1964] 191, 310.

<sup>113</sup> So a more general notion of distance is perhaps concretized. While the port in Attica is named, the Cretan port of Knossos could be alluded to here, given that ‘Crete’ becomes synonymous with that famous Cretan city in the stories of Minos and his family.

The great distances traversed between the two regions could also imply differences between them: this feature emerges if we consider the different ways in which the regions are described. Athens is referred to in epithetical terms (κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας, 'glorious Athens', at 760, similarly occurring at 423), while noticeably, no equivalent references to Crete occur in the play: Crete is not described as 'glorious', nor awarded any epithet, nor apostrophized. The poet appears to be drawing subtle contrasts between the two regions, Crete and Attica. The words ἀπείρου (τε) γᾶς (762-3) suggest an opposition: 'the mainland of Greece as opposed to the island of Crete'.<sup>114</sup> These differences could in turn also be seen to highlight the contrasts between mainland and island.

To sum up, we have so far seen that a contrast is suggested initially between Crete and the mainland. If we consider the 'loud-sounding sea wave' (at 753-4), and the 'harbor most hospitable to sailors' (at 156-7) a difference between the two regions could be implied in terms of a long, arduous journey that needs to be undertaken to reach Troezen from Crete. The language used to describe Athens suggests a contrast with Crete. In this way, difference is stressed between island and mainland.

However, on the other hand, this potential of opposition between the two regions could be viewed another way: as the forging of ties between them by Phaedra's journey from Crete to Troezen via Attica. In the process, not only have the island

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<sup>114</sup> Barrett 2001 [1964]: 310 n. 763

and the mainland become linked, so too have Crete, Athens and Troezen. This paradigm of distance and difference contrasted with connections forged through ties, is also suggested in the other ‘Cretan plays’, as I shall discuss later.

Apart from sea-related imagery and references to moorings at harbours, ropes also play a significant role in *Hippolytus*, with mentions of ropes recurring with some frequency in the work. These rope-related references (e.g. at 159-60; 762-3) are initially contextualized in terms of ships and sailing. But, the princess is also imagined on her bed (at 131 and at 158-60), bound to it by her soul, ψυχά.<sup>115</sup> The adjective εὐναῖος, ‘bound’, ‘anchored’ or ‘tied’ in line 160, evokes the use of more sea-related metaphors alluding to the ropes of ships anchoring in Attica as well as the rope by which Phaedra will hang herself.<sup>116</sup> This idea of being bound or tied is repeated in a later passage at 762-3:

ἐκδήσαντο πλεκτὰς πεισμάτων ἀρχὰς ἐπ’ ἀπείρου.

where they tied the plaited ends of the mooring cable.

The Chorus foretells graphically (at 767) the way their mistress will take her life:

Phaedra will fit a noose around her neck from a rope that hangs from the beams of

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<sup>115</sup> εὐναῖος meaning (i) in one’s bed (ii) wedded (iii) of or for anchorage, as well as other shades of meaning (*LSJ*:285). So, in this passage, Euripides could be suggesting Phaedra being tied to her marriage bed, thereby invoking the imagery of ropes. Also, with εὐναία being taken predicatively with δέδεταί, ‘is bound fast so as to be kept staying abed’; Barrett 2001 [1964]: 192 n. 159-60.

<sup>116</sup> E.g. see Halleran 1995: 164 n. 155-60

her bed chamber.<sup>117</sup> The ropes used in the princess' death can be seen as referring back to the recurring theme of sea-related imagery seen earlier that is associated with ships and sea-crossings from the Cretan island of Phaedra's birth.

So, as we have seen, the earlier reference to *eunaia* (160) in the context of being bound to the marriage bed is echoed later in terms of ships, ropes and mooring (762-3).

Ropes and hanging as the means by which Phaedra kills herself are significant from another perspective: Loraux and Goff both suggest that hanging was characterized in Greek tragedy as a specifically female death.<sup>118</sup> As Goff argues, Phaedra's chosen mode of death by hanging leading to a bloodless death is suggestive of a particularly 'gender-specific position', and one by which she 'inserts herself into an established tradition' of female deaths.<sup>119</sup> As Loraux points out, those women in tragedy who die, generally die violently, usually by suicide, and often by hanging. The knotted rope appears to provide the way out, while metaphorically tying different elements of character and plot together. So, Phaedra, a 'typical Greek woman', dies such a death, tying together elements such as her silence followed by the astounding revelation of the true cause of her ailment. But in *Hippolytus*, an added dimension is that the sea-related imagery of sailing and ropes is invoked in the context of this

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<sup>117</sup> See Barrett 2001: 311 n.767-72 'Hanging oneself involves two fastenings: of the rope to the beam and of the rope to one's neck. Here we have first the first fastening (τεράμνων...βρόχον,, (...) then the second (λ. κ. δ.;...)' i.e. λευκῇ καθαρμόζουσα δείρῃ

<sup>118</sup> Loraux 1987: 10, 14, 16-17; Goff 1990: 65

<sup>119</sup> Goff 1990:38; See also Barrett 2001: 311 n. 767-72. 'Ph. has declared her intention of suicide; the Chorus take it for granted that she will use a woman's traditional means.'

‘typical female death’. This notion is nuanced further: it would appear that the references to Phaedra as Cretan serve to emphasize her make-up as a *different* kind of Greek woman but a Greek woman nonetheless; Phaedra is not just female and Greek, she is also specifically Cretan as she herself as well as the Troezenian Women remind the audience on several occasions – both directly and by implication.<sup>120</sup> Euripides appears to evoke Phaedra’s Cretan origins as if to stress the idea that even her difference (in being Cretan) cannot make her into anything other than a typical Greek woman. So, the use of imagery of the rope which is connected to her hanging also appears to be ‘tied’ in this way, to Phaedra’s Cretan origins.<sup>121</sup> Phaedra’s Cretan-ness appears as a subset of Greekness.<sup>122</sup>

Silence generally, and the silence that Phaedra endures in not revealing the true cause of her suffering, could be seen as another aspect of a typically female death. Phaedra too becomes ‘invisible’ to the audience when she hangs herself; it is only later that we see her lifeless body lying on the ground.<sup>123</sup> So, the actual act of Phaedra dying is performed in what is arguably, a female way- out of sight, behind closed doors. This notion is perhaps comparable to the Crete of the play, often referred to but never actually seen, nor present as the place where any of the action

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<sup>120</sup> Phaedra – *Hipp.* 337, 683, 719; The Chorus – *Hipp.* 155-6, 372, 752, 759

<sup>121</sup> See Loraux 1987: 5, 8-10; Goff 1990: 62 on ropes and hanging as a woman’s death.

<sup>122</sup> Hall (1991): 170 ‘...nowhere is it implied that she is not Greek; if (...) Euripides had wanted to call her (...) or Pasiphae a barbarian then (...) would have done so.’

<sup>123</sup> Jocasta’s hanging (Soph. *Oedipus* 1311-1684) is described in similar terms, locking herself in her bedroom.



unfolds. So, I suggest that Crete's role is perhaps also to reinforce the feminine nature of Phaedra and her death. Crete is also an inherent part of who Phaedra is; as Loraux argues in the case of women in tragedy in general, women are free to kill themselves but they are not free enough to escape from the space to which they belong.<sup>124</sup> Phaedra may have left Crete, and may have been free to hang herself, but she still remains Cretan in identity even after her death. Even as Phaedra is hanging herself, the Chorus' song (732-775) includes references to Phaedra's Cretan origins (759).

There is another element of women and hanging that makes the act itself 'typically female': the fact that it is a bloodless form of death.<sup>125</sup> Apart from Phaedra, there is the case of her mother Pasiphae in *The Cretans* who was incarcerated in a subterranean prison, by her husband, Minos, and left to perish – another example of a bloodless death. Then there is another Cretan princess a generation later who can be seen to suffer the threat of another form of 'bloodless, female death', this time, death by drowning. Aerope, Phaedra's niece, a protagonist in Euripides' fragmentary work, *Cretan Women*, is to 'be sent to her death and destruction by dumb fishes'.<sup>126</sup> So, as with female deaths in general in tragedy (as Loraux has suggested), the deaths of these women in Euripides avoid bloodshed: they are

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<sup>124</sup> Loraux 1987: 23

<sup>125</sup> Compare this to 'the way a man must die' *onstage* by spilling blood, e.g. Ajax who undergoes a bloody death by the sword; Ajax 650-1; See also Loraux 1987: 12

<sup>126</sup> *Cretan Women* test. iiii, Collard and Cropp 2008a: 521

described in terms of hanging and drowning.<sup>127</sup> But Euripides also draws on specific strands in the portrayal of their deaths, namely sea-related imagery such as ships, ropes and fishes, which could be seen to impart a particular insular, Cretan flavour.

The sea-related imagery that has already been described is also significant in a broader sense: it emphasizes the importance of the sea in the context of Crete, the island. I analyse references to the sea in this context in greater detail in Chapter 5. Here, however, I draw attention to lines 753-4 where several sensuous, elemental details of the sea are evoked, for example, ‘the roaring sea-waves of the deep’.<sup>128</sup> The phrase reflects a vivid description of the sea that engages not only the audience’s sense of sight (πόντιον κύμα, ‘the swell of the sea’<sup>129</sup> in 753-4), but also their sense of hearing (‘roaring’, or ‘the slap of the waves against the ship’s sides’<sup>130</sup>- ἀλίκτυπον, 754) but also taste, in ἄλμας, ‘deep’ or ‘brine’ (754).<sup>131</sup> Such a vivid evocation of the seascape, I suggest, emphasizes Crete’s associations with the sea, both the waters surrounding its coast and the seas separating it from the mainland.<sup>132</sup> The play (as we have already noted) is imbued with references to the sea and watery landscapes, and such references are reinforced by the use of metaphors relating to ships and ropes.

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<sup>127</sup> By comparison, a man’s death is regarded as a “pure” form of death, and so, the latter, by inference, is “impure” (Loraux 1987: 14)

<sup>128</sup> trans. Halleran 1995: 105

<sup>129</sup> πόντιος; κύμα. *LSJ* 578 and 399 respectively,

<sup>130</sup> See Barrett 2001: 306

<sup>131</sup> Halleran 1995: 214 cf. Padel 1974:230, where ἄλμας, “‘deep’ in its lit. meaning, is ‘brine’”.

<sup>132</sup> The seas and separation from the mainland are essential elements in how islands were perceived in fifth-century discourse (see Constantakopoulou 2007 esp. Ch. 1).

In summary, the main elements that surface from an analysis of these two passages (155-60 and 752-763) are: first, that the passages are imbued with imagery relating to the sea, sailing and other sea-related references. Secondly, the imagery of sailing has inherent features within it which suggest an emphasis on points of departure and arrival. Thirdly, differences and similarities between the regions are also implied. In these passages, the points of departure suggest a port (or ports) in Crete, and of arrival at the port of Mounichia in Troezen. By highlighting the places of departure and arrival, the contrast between the island and the mainland is stressed. Also, links are suggested between the two regions by the use of imagery relating to the tying of ropes and of moorings.

A fourth recognizable element is the way in which sea-related imagery, including ropes and Cretan vessels, evoke Phaedra's female nature; these elements are linked back to her choice of the means of killing herself – suicide by hanging, a typical female form of death. The idea of a female 'death by hanging' is then extended to include another element of female killing – a bloodless death. So, generally speaking, the women in the chosen works could be seen to reflect the nature of feminine deaths as seen in Euripides' works as well in tragedy more generally; Phaedra, Pasiphae and Aerope can be added to the wider list of female protagonists who either die this 'bloodless' way, or contemplate death in this manner; the list could also include Euripides' Helen, Leda and Evadne, and Sophocles' Jocasta and

Antigone.<sup>133</sup> In the case of Phaedra however (as mentioned previously) her feminine death appears to be nuanced further as different by dint of her Cretan origins.

Furthermore, the elemental features of the sea are also vividly invoked in several ways. Euripides' reputation for invoking sea-related imagery is famous, of course, but these features observed in the poet's 'Cretan plays' nevertheless take on a special resonance.<sup>134</sup> Such portrayals of the sea's physical qualities suggest its central nature in conjuring up a Crete as a piece of land surrounded entirely by water, and the notion of insularity in considering the character and actions of the Cretan Phaedra.

All these various features of Crete-related associations that have so far emerged will also be considered in the other passages that are analyzed in this chapter. The aim will be to establish whether and how these ideas manifest themselves in the rest of the play, as well as to evaluate the significance of these emerging themes in the context of the chosen works.

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<sup>133</sup> Euripides: *Helen* 353-357; Leda in *Helen* 686-7; Evadne in *Suppliant Women* 1045-47; Sophocles: Jocasta in *Oedipus* 1311-1684; *Antigone* 1220-22.

<sup>134</sup> See e.g. Wright (2005) 203-4

### 2.2.2 Phaëdra's 'family inheritance'

So far in this discussion, we have noted how Phaëdra's Cretan origins and her ill fortune have been highlighted, in the most part by the Chorus. In this section, however, I analyze passages from which a different perspective emerges: Phaëdra's *own* references back to her family history. While her reminiscences of her family continue to emphasize the trait of 'illicit sexual passion', characteristic of the Cretan women that we met previously, they also serve to highlight Crete's distinct nature in a different way. Phaëdra sees herself as doomed in the way her mother and sister before her have been. Lines 337-343 appear to stress this feature:

{ΦΑΙΔΡΑ} ὦ τλήμον, οἶον, μήτερ, ἡράσθης ἔρον.	337
{ΤΡΟΦΟΣ} ὃν ἔσχε ταύρου, τέκνον; ἢ τί φῆις τόδε;	
{ΦΑΙΔΡΑ} σύ τ', ὦ τάλαιν' ὅμαιμε, Διονύσου δάμαρ.	
{ΤΡΟΦΟΣ} τέκνον, τί πάσχεις; συγγόνους κακορροθεῖς;	
{ΦΑΙΔΡΑ} τρίτη δ' ἐγὼ δύστηνος ὡς ἀπόλλυμαι.	
{ΤΡΟΦΟΣ} ἔκ τοι πέπληγμαι· ποῖ προβήσεται λόγος;	
{ΦΑΙΔΡΑ} ἐκεῖθεν ἡμεῖς, οὐ νεωστί, δυστυχεῖς.	343

Phaëdra:

Unhappy mother, what a love was yours!

Nurse:

For the Cretan bull, my child? Or what do you mean?

Phaëdra:

And you, poor sister, Dionysus' bride!

Nurse:

What ails you, child? Are you slandering your kin?

Phaëdra:

And I the third, how wretchedly I perish!

Nurse:

I am utterly stunned. Where will these words lead?

Phaedra:

From far back came my woe, not from recent times!

Two specific elements are alluded to in this passage – Phaedra’s family history and her Cretan provenance - which she suggests was the cause of her downfall. The implication here is that Phaedra’s Cretan provenance is linked to her illicit desires and her eventual doom. So, it now appears, superficially at least, that the origins of her sexual passions are also directly linked to her Cretan roots. Each of the women, Pasiphae, Ariadne and Phaedra, appear, in different ways, to be the victims of sexual passion. They all hail from the same royal house of Minos. So, illicit desire appears to be inextricably connected with the Cretan royal family. Or, at least, this is how Phaedra could be seen as perceiving a link between herself and the other two women who are at the heart of her Cretan family myth. It is interesting to speculate on how Euripides might be playing with expectations here: perhaps to an onlooker (the Nurse included) Phaedra is just one character in a long line of Cretan misfits. However, Phaedra in this version, is very much her own person, conscious of her role as a paradigmatic woman, as her speech after this revelation (373-430) makes clear. So, perhaps Euripides is turning stereotypes on their heads here: Phaedra is not the ‘typical Cretan women’ that the Nurse nor the audience have taken her to be, after all. On the contrary, she appears to have some control on demonstrating her own feelings and desires (notwithstanding Aphrodite’s role in Phaedra’s fate). Another possibility worth considering is that Phaedra’s fate is not really linked to her family myth- or at least, that this link is not the direct cause of her downfall. She

could be no more than the unlucky instrument of Aphrodite (as is made abundantly clear to the audience in lines 29-50). Phaedra may be more conscious of the former but unaware of the latter, and so here we, the audience, could be seeing the interplay of these two perspectives at work. Euripides is perhaps suggesting a link between the inevitability of tragic causation on the one hand- and the ambiguity of Phaedra's nature, on the other, and the effects of one on the other rather than any direct, simplistic link between Phaedra's Cretan family myth and her downfall. So, as typically with tragedy, the Phaedra character is multi-layered, nuanced and complex.

Analyzing the passage further, we find that, when compelled by the Nurse to reveal the cause of her woes, Phaedra's very first utterance at 337 is directed at her mother:

ὦ τλήμων, οἶον, μήτερ, ἡρώσθης ἔρον.

Unhappy mother, what a love was yours!

The Nurse then suggests (338) that her mistress might be referring to Pasiphae's love for a bull. Phaedra does not, however, confirm or refute the Nurse's interpretation; however, what we have here is an indication that Phaedra's family history was well-known at the Troezen court. This being the case, there would be no real reason for Phaedra to spell out the details again. It could also be that Phaedra seeks to avert the shame associated with having to specify the details of her mother's story here again.

When, at 338, the Nurse asks:

ὄν ἔσχε ταύρου, τέκνον; ἢ τί φῆις τόδε;

(is it love) For the Cretan bull, my child? Or what do you mean? <sup>135</sup>

Phaedra is silent, perhaps intimating that the answer is obvious. The story of Pasiphae's bull is one of the many references to bovine elements that surface in Euripides' 'Cretan plays'.<sup>136</sup> Euripides' own references to different aspects of these same myths involving the bull occur in at least two other works in addition to *Hippolytus - The Cretans* and *Theseus* (which are considered in detail later in this study).<sup>137</sup> From myth, such bovine imagery appears to be closely associated with the island of Phaedra's birth.<sup>138</sup> Apart from the word ταύρου at 338 that appears in connection with Pasiphae, another bull also makes an appearance as the agent that will cause Hippolytus' own death towards the end of the play. There, it is a bull from the sea sent by Poseidon (1214). So, the theme of bovine imagery in the context of Crete, is significant (and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5).

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<sup>135</sup> My parenthesis

<sup>136</sup> See Euripides *Cretans* 472<sup>e</sup>; also see Appendix 2, Chapter 1. See also Bacchylides' version in *Ode* 26 Sn. 7; Barrett (2001) 222 n. 337-8.

<sup>137</sup> Collard and Cropp 2008a; *Cretans* 529-556; *Theseus* 415-429; the reference in Plutarch, *Life of Theseus* XV. 2 also attest to the continuing popularity of Euripides' versions of the myths into the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD.

<sup>138</sup> Apart from Phaedra, there is the Cretan bull from Hercules' Seventh Labour.



The reference at 339 is possibly to Ariadne and her ill-fated love for Theseus, known from mythological accounts.<sup>139</sup> Popular versions of this story have Ariadne helping Theseus escape from the Labyrinth.<sup>140</sup> They then elope together from Crete to Dia (or Naxos). Most versions then have Theseus abandoning Ariadne on the island and sailing off for Athens. At this point, Dionysus rescues Ariadne. An early version suggests that it was Artemis who slew Ariadne on the grounds that she was unfaithful to Dionysus; this is perhaps because the god was not Ariadne's first choice as lover.<sup>141</sup> Here, in Euripides, Phaedra compares her sister's fate to her own.<sup>142</sup> By referring to Ariadne's story in quick succession to Pasiphae's, Euripides thus appears to evoke the whole corpus of Cretan myths, including, importantly, Ariadne's role in the Minotaur-Theseus story. So, the reference to Ariadne by Phaedra stresses the presence of Cretan bovine-related features to be found in both her sister's and her mother's stories as well as her own.<sup>143</sup>

From Phaedra's references to her mother (337) and sister (339), we note that while the princess contextualizes her own passion and its causes in relation to her family's

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<sup>139</sup> Ariadne's role in the Theseus-Minotaur story is pivotal.

<sup>140</sup> *Od.* 11.321-5; See also e.g. Apollodorus *Epitome* i. 7-8; for the continuing popularity of this version of Ariadne's story see Armstrong 2006 esp. 187-260, also Ziolkowski 2008 esp. 119-26.

<sup>141</sup> See Armstrong 2006: 8 n.20 for an alternative version in which Ariadne was already married (to Dionysus) when the hero arrived in Crete, and so it was she, not Theseus, who 'sinned'; cf. Barrett 2001 [1964] on *Hipp.* 339; see also Kovacs 1995: 157 note b; Barrett 2001: 222-3. See also Armstrong 2006, Ch. 5-7 for detailed discussions on the myths of Pasiphae, Ariadne and Phaedra.

<sup>142</sup> See Barrett 2001: 222-3 n.339.

<sup>143</sup> The bovine motif manifests itself in *Hippolytus* in the form of two bulls: the bull which Pasiphae desired and the bull which slays Hippolytus. In *The Cretans* and the *Theseus*, the motif appears as Pasiphae's bull and the Minotaur. (See Chapter 4 on the imagery of the bovine in Euripides).

passions and their fates, she does not dwell on this, and makes no further reference to it herself in the rest of the play. This feature adds further weight to the observation made earlier on page 62, arguing against the risk of making a more simplistic link between Phaedra's family history and her own doom.

At 340, the Nurse has heard Phaedra's outpourings about her family but is still unclear what exactly these references mean in connection with her ailment:

τέκνον, τί πάσχεις; συγγόνους κακορροθεῖς;

What ails you, child? Are you slandering your kin?

The Nurse has no idea what Phaedra is implying but appears concerned given Phaedra's sudden (and shocking) references to her family. As before, Phaedra ignores the questions and instead, at 341, refers to herself as the third, after her mother and sister, to be inflicted with a similar malady:

τρίτη δ' ἐγὼ δύστηνος ὡς ἀπόλλυμαι.

And I the third, how wretchedly I perish!

The Nurse is beginning to see the truth at 342 with ἔκ τοι πέπληγμαι.<sup>144</sup> She is beginning to realize what Phaedra is trying to say: she is the third of three women from her family to suffer from illicit passion. Such passion is inherited; it is in

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<sup>144</sup> Here, Euripides uses the word πέπληγμαι, *peplegmai*, metaphorically (*I am struck*) where Aeschylus had used it literally, in the death cries of Agamemnon (Aes. Ag. 1345: πεπληγμένος, *struck down dead*), as if to indicate the inevitability of death as Phaedra's fate. It is quite a provocation to hear the Nurse utter such an exclamation regarding something that she has heard. Perhaps, Nurse is also recalling Ariadne and Pasiphae's similar fates.

Phaedra's blood.<sup>145</sup> The Nurse is stunned by this revelation, unsure of its consequences.

ἔκ τοι πέπληγμαι· ποῖ προβήσεται λόγος;

I am utterly stunned. Where will these words lead?

Phaedra continues to reveal more to her Nurse about her secret passion. This time at 343, the queen appears to offer a definitive explanation for the references to Pasiphae and Ariadne made previously – hers is an affliction originating in her past:

ἐκεῖθεν ἡμεῖς, οὐ νεωστί, δυστυχεῖς.

From far back came my woe, not from recent times!

Phaedra's remark could imply family misfortunes that she, Pasiphae and Ariadne have suffered in the recent past.<sup>146</sup> Equally, Phaedra's 'woe from the past' could also suggest something more than misfortunes inherited from just one previous generation: οὐ νεωστί could suggest a period a little further back than from the time of the princess' departure from Crete. It could also imply a reference to her family history from even before Pasiphae, starting with the fate of her great-great-grandmother, Io, who was punished by Zeus by being turned into a cow who was pursued by a gadfly. Then there was also the fate of her grandmother, Europa,

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<sup>145</sup> Barrett 2001: 223 paraphrasing 341, 'my trouble is one that the women of my family have in their blood.'; I suggest, though, that this is an overly simplistic reading; Phaedra's illicit passion is configured so differently, almost ordinarily, to suggest it could happen to anyone.

<sup>146</sup> Interestingly, the first version, *Hippolytus Kaluptomenos* also appears to invoke Pasiphae's sinful passion at f444. See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 484-5: *you deity, how mortal men have no way to avert their inborn or godsent troubles!* (See note 1 on 'godsent', the same word used of Pasiphae's passion for the bull at *The Cretans* f472e.30).

seduced, then kidnapped by Zeus and brought by stealth from Phoenicia to Crete on a bull.<sup>147</sup> So, it is not unthinkable that line 343, 'From far back came my woe, not from recent times!', could be understood by some audience members as a reference to the inherited family misfortunes inflicted upon all Cretan royal women. One reading of this is that the dramatist is invoking all of the Cretan women from mythology who suffered similar woes. In addition to Io, Europa, Pasiphae and Phaedra, in the next generation Aerope will also suffer the consequences of illicit desire – this time, sentenced to death by drowning for sleeping with a servant. As previously noted, these observations perhaps point to the complex nature of tragic causation and the ambiguity of Phaedra's character where Euripides could be seen to be thwarting audience expectations.

Phaedra's revelations to the Nurse continue in the latter half of 337-43. Like the Nurse, we too learn of Phaedra's hidden sexual desires, revealed in the context of her family's past history. The clues she provides are used by the Nurse finally to surmise the truth. Phaedra's tendency here appears to be more to conceal than to reveal. Pasiphae too was similarly secretive when she concealed from Minos her affair with the bull and the birth of the Minotaur.<sup>148</sup> These facets in their characters of concealment, comprising elements of secrecy and the dark *v.* revelation, exposure and the light, is part of the dynamic of polarities that some of Euripides' female tragic characters

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<sup>147</sup> Europa herself describes suffering the consequences of her fate e.g. in Aeschylus *Carians* f99.1-11.

<sup>148</sup> The Chorus deliberate on Pasiphae's concealment of the affair and the birth of the Minotaur, at *The Cretans* f472e.1-2.

display.<sup>149</sup> Recalling the manner of Phaedra's death, the hanging could be viewed as 'the very special oscillation between revelation and concealment' along with the other facets noted in Phaedra's character.<sup>150</sup> Considering the characters of both Pasiphae and Phaedra, a more general tendency begins to surface of how Euripides includes these Cretan women in his construct of females being secretive, and prone more to silence and concealment than to speech and revelation.<sup>151</sup> Another point that could be noted in relation to the idea of concealment and revelation is the very different reasons and effects of these for Phaedra. She is perhaps trying to conceal out of shame rather than from shamelessness. Here, Euripides could be seen to be reworking expectations – especially if we consider his previous version, *Hippolytus Kaluptomenos*, where Phaedra was more like her forbears, brazenly flaunting her sexual desires. So, the features of concealment and revelation could be understood in different ways over these two works.

Importantly, then, and to summarize, this passage 337-43 contains the first reference (of three) in the play to the actions of a protagonist influenced by their family history. Phaedra's woes strike a chord with her mother's and sister's own stories. More generally, the misfortunes of Cretan royal women can be discerned through the generations – they are also a central theme in Euripides' other 'Cretan plays',

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<sup>149</sup> See my discussion later in this chapter in 2.3.2 on Euripides' deployment of polarities.

<sup>150</sup> Loraux 1987: 22; also noted in the case of Euripides' heroine, Alcestis.

<sup>151</sup> See Goff 1990 Ch. 1, esp. 12-20 on 'concealment and revelation', especially interesting if viewed in terms of the dynamic of Crete as used as a foil for Athens.

notably *The Cretans* and *Cretan Women*.<sup>152</sup> The theme of doom brought upon Cretan women as inherited sexual passion is another discernible element which offers various (often competing) interpretations, as I have already noted.<sup>153</sup>

As we have seen, Phaedra also makes reference in this passage to Pasiphae's affair with the bull. In broader terms, the creature forms part of the many references to bovine elements closely associated with the island of Phaedra's birth, as observed in Euripides' other works on the theme. By alluding to Ariadne's story in quick succession to Pasiphae's, Euripides can be seen to be highlighting the bovine theme, including the bull and Minotaur-elements which recur in the stories of Ariadne, Pasiphae and Phaedra. The bovine emerges as a clearly identifiable theme in Euripides' portrayal of Crete. The close association of the bovine theme with Phaedra and her mother appears to suggest, so far, a particularly Cretan kind of woman.

### 2.2.3 Lines 362-372 and 373-430

Phaedra's Cretan origins are once more highlighted in a further passage on lines 362-372. The Chorus considers Phaedra's impending doom:

ἄιες ὦ, ἔκλυες ὦν,  
ἀνήκουστα τᾶς

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<sup>152</sup> And are also alluded to in the cases of Io and Europa in Euripides *Hypsipyle* 1752g

<sup>153</sup> E.g., as I discuss in Chapter 5, Minos suffers the indignation of having a queen who mates with a bull and gives birth to the Minotaur. Aerope too, in *Cretan Women*, behaves in ways similar to her antecedents, Pasiphae and Phaedra, when she sleeps with her servant.

τυράννου πάθεα μέλεα θρεομένας;  
 ὀλοίμαν ἔγωγε πρὶν σᾶν, φίλα,  
 κατανύσαι φρενῶν. ἰὼ μοι, φεῦ φεῦ· 365  
 ὦ τάλαινα τῶνδ' ἀλγέων·  
 ὦ πόνοι τρέφοντες βροτούς.  
 ὀλωλας, ἐξέφηνας ἐς φάος κακά.  
 τίς σε παναμέριος ὅδε χρόνος μένει;  
 τελευτάσεται τι καινὸν δόμοις·  
 ἄσημα δ' οὐκέτ' ἐστὶν οἱ φθίνει τύχα  
 Κύπριδος, ὦ τάλαινα παῖ Κρησία. 372

Oh, did you catch, oh, did you hear the queen uttering  
 woes past hearing? Death take me, my friend, before I  
 come to share your thoughts! Ah me! Alas! Oh, how  
 wretched you are because of this woe! Oh, the troubles  
 that have mortals in their keeping! You are undone, you  
 have brought calamity into the daylight! The hours of this  
 long day – what awaits you in them? Some unlucky  
 change for the house will be brought to pass. It is no  
 longer uncertain how the fortune sent by Cypris will end,  
 O unhappy Cretan girl!

This lyric (362-72) has the effect of dividing the long episode (170-524) into two  
 scenes of approximately even lengths.<sup>154</sup> Earlier, we saw Phaedra reveal her true  
 feelings about Hippolytus, and as a result the Chorus suggest that the outcome is  
 now 'no longer certain'. So, if the first half can be seen in the context of 'revelation',  
 with the second half veering more towards 'explanation'. The Nurse has been  
 successful in persuading her mistress to reveal Hippolytus' name at 351. At 372,  
 Phaedra's Cretan origins are highlighted as if to explain her actions. Here again, we  
 see the links between Phaedra, her fate (371) and her Cretan origins (372).

<sup>154</sup> See Halleran 1995: 179 n. 362-72 on an insightful discussion of the division of the lyric.

The Chorus' reference to the 'unhappy Cretan girl' at 372 recalls Phaedra's own lament ('how wretchedly I perish!' at 341). Both highlight the queen's unhappy state and both contextualize Phaedra's fate in terms of her Cretan provenance. Lines 155-60 (previously discussed) also stress this connection. Taken together, they suggest here that Phaedra and the Chorus consider Crete as the source of her unhappiness, leaving the picture more open-ended for the audience (who are aware that Phaedra's woes have really been brought about by the goddess Aphrodite).

The reference by the Chorus to Κρησία, 'Cretan girl' (372) also occurs at 752. The first reference has the effect of stressing the link between 'Cretan woman' and 'unhappiness'. The second reference at 752, ὦ λευκόπτερε Κρησία, 'O Cretan vessel', occurs in the context of the ship that ferried Phaedra from Crete to Troezen; the phrase is also translated as 'whitewinged Cretan ship' and could be seen to take on another dimension in a Cretan context: the ship's onward journey with Theseus on board. From mythological accounts, we know that on leaving Crete, Theseus sailed on to Dia (or Naxos);<sup>155</sup> the hero then left the island heading back home to Athens. However, his failure to replace black sails with white (as previously arranged) led to the death of his father, Aegeus, who drowned himself in the sea. So, in this context, the reference to a 'whitewinged' ship suggests a sense of foreboding indicating Aegeus' doom. So here, Euripides appears to be drawing a

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<sup>155</sup> Barrett 2001: 306 n. 752-7



parallel between Phaedra's imminent death and the misfortunes that will befall Theseus in the future that somehow appear linked to Crete. The protagonists appear to be tainted by their association with Crete.

Phaedra's wretched state is stressed by the same vocative, ὦ τάλαινα, (wretched, unhappy) which is used twice, at 366 and 372. The passage contextualizes this wretched state in terms of 'the fortunes sent by Cypris' but also by reference to Phaedra as Cretan. From 337-343, it could be suggested that the notion of being a Cretan woman can be linked to unnatural desires. Also, the lines 373-430, when taken together with 362-72, can be seen further to reinforce the allusions to Phaedra's illicit passion. The association of Crete with unnatural love is stressed more than once in *Hippolytus*.<sup>156</sup> In this latter passage, Phaedra finally confesses her feelings, having now declared the object of her illicit desire and her resolution to die. In these lines, in offering the fullest explanation so far for her actions, Phaedra highlights the following: that the concealment of her malady was the way she had chosen to contain the problem (393-4), and that she undertook to bear the malady nobly, attempting to overcome it by self-control,<sup>157</sup> or being able 'to bear well her folly' (398-9).<sup>158</sup> However, on realizing that she was incapable of containing her passion ('I was unable to master Cypris'), she 'resolved on death' (400-2). These characteristics are perhaps what make Phaedra stand out from this catalogue of Cretan women – as

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<sup>156</sup> See also lines 337-43; Ferguson 1995: 60 n. 372.

<sup>157</sup> The concept of σωφροσύνη, *sophrosune*, being an important, recurring theme in *Hipp*.

<sup>158</sup> Trans. Halleran 1995: 184

well from her previous portrayal in *Hippolytus Kaluptomenos*. This time, Phaedra appears to have some control over her fate – she suggests that the decision to die (or, at least, to die in the way she chose to) was ultimately hers, although Cypris left her no choice in the matter.

This revelatory speech echoes similar responses by her mother, Pasiphae, when undergoing a similar emotional crisis.<sup>159</sup> Phaedra herself admitted how similar to hers the passions and ensuing fates of her mother and sister have been (at 337-43), and if we consider Pasiphae in *The Cretans*, she too shrouds in secrecy her emotions and actions.<sup>160</sup> Initially, Pasiphae conceals the fact that she had mated with a bull, and had conceived the Minotaur. In her speech before Minos, she explains that her extreme passions were caused by a god, not by her.<sup>161</sup> Pasiphae attempts to bear the situation with *aidos*, but when she does finally succumb, she too attempts secrecy and silence, just as her daughter will do.<sup>162</sup> But in the end, their fates are sealed: Phaedra will commit suicide, while her mother will be incarcerated and be put to death by her own husband.<sup>163</sup> Parallels in Euripides' construct of Pasiphae and

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<sup>159</sup> See Halleran 1995: 180 n. 373-430 on interpreting Phaedra's speech not as an *apologia* explaining her moral failure, but her moral standards which, given the circumstances, now require her suicide. It is interesting to compare this to Pasiphae's speech in Euripides frag. *Cretans* 472e 4-40. Also see Chapters 4 and 5, where I suggest that Crete-the-island draws out of its characters, feelings of extreme passion.

<sup>160</sup> The Chorus responds to this with lyric alarm at *The Cretans* f472e.1-2.

<sup>161</sup> It is interesting to consider how, in case of Phaedra, Euripides has left this path open to her. It would be quite legitimate for her to claim the role of Aphrodite, because we have seen this at the beginning of *Hipp.* – but she does not, at least, not entirely.

<sup>162</sup> Given its various shades of meaning, *aidos* here is taken to suggest a combination of 'shame, modesty, reverence, and respect' (Mills 2002: 55).

<sup>163</sup> *The Cretans* f472e.45-7

Phaedra can be noted here: they are both victims of the gods but they bear their fates with differing degrees of *aidos*. The women's actions, could, of course, also be seen in wider terms relating to how women were depicted in a tradition of misogyny that goes back to Hesiod, or to the use of paradigms from epic and myth, for example, Penelope: good and Clytemnestra: bad. However, in addition to these representations of women from early literature, Euripides appears to weave into the construct of his Cretan women links to both their ancestry and to Crete implying that, in part at least, they are this way because they are Cretan. However, in so doing, the poet can be seen to be deploying these previously familiar notions in new, innovative ways that lend greater ambiguity, subtlety and depth to the women's characters. The element of Cretan-ness that the two women display is reflected by their particular 'unnatural' sexual passions and their eventual doom. Although the circumstances of their respective passions are different (one loves a bull and contrives a way in which to have sex with the animal; the other has a desire for her stepson, which she pointedly does not consummate), I suggest that Euripides invites us to see associations between the women in terms of their common kinship and their Cretan provenance. I explore these associations further in Chapter 4 as part of the poet's construct of Crete.

In summary, then, the salient points to emerge from the two passages 362-72 include an emphasis on Phaedra's Cretan provenance. For example, the Women of Troezen appear to link Phaedra's origins to her actions. They highlight this association by

further suggesting that her Cretan-ness will also be responsible for her doom, brought about by her actions. Her Cretan-ness also refers to her inherited passion that she perceives she will suffer from. The ill-fortunes suffered by her mother and sister in the past will parallel Phaedra's own fate. However, although- in many ways- it might appear from a first reading that Phaedra is being typecast in this way, she also fights against this kind of stereotyping when we see her actions being tempered by her various displays of *aidos*, as I have suggested.

Secrecy and concealment are also features that continue to be emphasized in this passage in connection with Phaedra's character. Furthermore, interconnections can be seen between Phaedra's and Pasiphae's tendencies towards secrecy. These interconnections appear to suggest a more general theme connected with Euripides' representation of Cretan women: their propensity for illicit passion and their ensuing (doomed) fates, features that will be explored in other passages in the work.

#### **2.2.4 Lines 715-721**

The final lines analyzed in this chapter are 715-721; here, that facet of Phaedra's character, her sense of *aidos*, comes to the fore.<sup>164</sup> Although, we see this facet displayed throughout the play (for example, at 47-8, 244, 335, and 381-7), this time however, we see it in what appears to be an exclusively Cretan context:

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<sup>164</sup> See also, earlier note 162 on *aidos*.

καλῶς ἐλέξαθ'· ἐν δὲ πρὸς τούτοις ἐρῶ<sup>165</sup>. 715  
 εὖρημα δὴ τι τῇσδε συμφορᾶς ἔχω,  
 ὥστ' εὐκλεᾶ μὲν παισὶ προσθεῖναι βίον  
 αὐτῇ τ' ὄνασθαι πρὸς τὰ νῦν πεπτωκότα.  
 οὐ γάρ ποτ' αἰσχυνῶ γε Κρησίους δόμους  
 οὐδ' ἐς πρόσωπον Θησέως ἀφίξομαι 720  
 αἰσχροῖς ἐπ' ἔργοις οὔνεκα ψυχῆς μιᾶς.

Thank you for your words. I have one further thing to add: I have discovered a remedy for this trouble of mine so that I may bequeath to my sons a life of good repute and gain myself some advantage in my present plight. For I shall never disgrace my Cretan home nor shall I go to face Theseus with shameful deeds against my name, all to save a single life.

Phaedra's short speech to the Chorus comes soon after she has managed to persuade them to keep her secret (710-4). Her arguments are significant in the context of her sons and her Cretan home. I suggest that the order in which she chooses to reveal the information in this passage is indicative of the importance Phaedra places on safeguarding her *Cretan* home and her children. The queen has found a solution to the current state of affairs when her feelings for Hippolytus have become public. The queen first explains why she intends to kill herself. For her, it is a way (the only way she knows) to ensure that her sons are 'bequeathed a life of good reputation' (717-8), and that this way, she herself retains her honour and standing as queen of

<sup>165</sup> As noted in 1.4, *Hipp.* 715 is an example of differences in interpretation between the Loeb edition (Kovacs 1995) and the *Oxford Classical Text* (Diggle 1984). While this study retains Kovacs' text, it is noted that Kovacs himself adopts a conjecture of Barrett (2001) plus a prior suggestion of Hadley (Diggle 1984:238). Diggle's edition prints the corrupt and problematic phrase ἱπποτρέπουσ' ἐγὼ† found in the key manuscripts while expressing approval for Barrett's conjecture ('forte recte') in his critical apparatus. Diggle also notes Hadley's suggestion. Meanwhile, Halleran (1995:210) offers a useful and concise explanation of the issues.

Troezen, wife of Theseus, and mother to his sons.<sup>166</sup> Her considerations are based on not wishing to disgrace her 'Cretan home'. Such a sentiment is of particular relevance; several different interpretations can be drawn from her words: the first, that Phaedra is being intentionally ambiguous. The use of deliberate ambiguity has been considered previously, for example, by Barrett, to signal her intention to take her own life.<sup>167</sup> Several other interpretations of these lines (715-721) are also possible and are considered here in brief in the context of Phaedra's reference to Crete in line 719; first, that Phaedra is referring to the famed Crete from epic and myth; and secondly, that the reference is to her current home and to her two half-Cretan sons.

So, a more literal reading of line 719 is that hers is no ordinary Cretan home. Given the fame attributed to Crete from epic as a rich and fertile island, and to its great king Minos and its illustrious 'founder', Zeus, who was born on the island, the case can be made for the well-established, high status of the island already apparent in earlier literary sources.<sup>168</sup> It is perhaps this home that Phaedra has no intention of disgracing if she can help it. If this is indeed her intended meaning, then, it sits at odds with Phaedra's earlier utterance at 337-43 that suggests that Cretan royal women suffer a particular notoriety. Phaedra's sense of *aidos* displayed here appears to override her earlier confession to the Nurse, turning it on its head. Or, perhaps,

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<sup>166</sup> Notably, no-one in the play refers to Phaedra as 'queen of Troezen', and nor does Phaedra herself (although the Chorus come close in 158, *the queen*).

<sup>167</sup> See, e.g., Barrett 2001 [1964]: 296 n. 721.

<sup>168</sup> E.g. see *Od.* 14.199-200, 19.172-4, 178; Hes. *Theogony* 468-84; Plato *Minos*.

the poet is drawing on a particular facet of character inherent in Cretan women – they can be both famous and of high repute as well as be notorious and of ill-repute at the same time (this feature is certainly the case if we consider Phaedra’s actions in *Hippolytus*).

The second interpretation that can be suggested of Phaedra’s comments is that this is a reference to her two sons from her current home in Troezen who are half-Cretan (that is, ‘the children I gave birth to’ in 421, discussed below). Perhaps it is this fact that this is uppermost in Phaedra’s mind when she refers to the ‘Cretan home’ that houses her sons who she does not wish to disgrace. This interpretation gains plausibility when considered in the context of the earlier line 717:

so that I may bequeath to my sons a life of good repute.

Although Phaedra does not name her sons specifically (nor can we glean this from the work), we can assume that these are her sons by Theseus. However, epic and earlier versions of the myths are divided on the true parentage of Theseus’ sons, often named as Akamas and Demophon.<sup>169</sup> They do, however, appear as the two sons of Theseus, and as kings of Athens in Euripides’ *Heracleidae*, believed to have

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<sup>169</sup> It is possible that only in this Euripidean version do we first find Phaedra as the mother of Theseus’ sons. See e.g. Gantz 1993: 269 and n. 11; scholia on *Od.* 11.321 suggest Ariadne as the mother of Akamas and Demophon (noting the more obscure possibility from pottery that Ariadne and Dionysus could be their parents.); also, Gantz 1993: 283 where (from Pindar) Demophon at least, is the child of Theseus (and Antiope); Also the two boys are named as sons of Phaedra by Theseus in the later Apollodorus *Epitome* 1.16-19

been written at about the same time as Euripides' second *Hippolytus*.<sup>170</sup> At

*Heracleidae* 34-6, we find:

πεδία γὰρ τῆσδε χθονὸς  
δισσοὺς κατοικεῖν Θησέως παῖδας λόγος  
κλήρῳ λαχόντας ἐκ γένους Πανδίωνος,  
τοῖσδ' ἐγγὺς ὄντας· 35

for 'tis said two sons  
of Theseus dwell upon these plains,  
the lot of their inheritance,  
scions of Pandion's stock, related to these children;<sup>171</sup>

and later in the same play:

ἐσθλοῦ πατρὸς παῖς Δημοφῶν ὁ Θησέως. 115

Demophon, son of gallant Theseus.

A similar reference also occurs in Euripides' *Hecuba*:

τὼ Θησείδα δ',  
ὄζῳ Ἀθηνῶν 122

the two sons of Theseus,  
scions of Athens....<sup>172</sup>

Given these references and allusions to Akamas and Demophon as Theseus' sons in both *Heracleidae* and *Hecuba*, we could well surmise the same reference to Phaedra's

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<sup>170</sup> c.429-428BC

<sup>171</sup> Trans. Coleridge 1891

<sup>172</sup> Trans. Coleridge 1891



sons in *Hippolytus* 717. Other accounts of Theseus' life also suggest that they were his two sons by his 'last wife', Phaedra.<sup>173</sup> A strong emotional bond between Theseus and Phaedra and their happy marriage and family life are certainly suggested, for example, at *Hippolytus* 848-51 and 858-60. Phaedra's desire to bequeath to her sons 'a life of good repute' would be in keeping with what Athenians might expect of their future kings.<sup>174</sup> At 419-23, their mother goes to some length to relate to the Chorus the benefits that her death will bring to her household, especially to her sons:<sup>175</sup>

ἡμᾶς γὰρ αὐτὸ τοῦτ' ἀποκτείνει, φίλοι,	
ὥς μήποτ' ἄνδρα τὸν ἐμὸν αἰσχύνασ' ἄλῳ,	420
μὴ παιῖδας οὖς ἔτικτον· ἀλλ' ἐλεύθεροι	
παρρησίαι θάλλοντες οἰκοῖεν πόλιν	
κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν, μητρὸς οὐνεκ' εὐκλειεῖς.	423

My friends, it is this very purpose that is bringing about my death, that I may not be convicted of bringing shame to my husband or to the children I gave birth to but rather that they may live in glorious Athens as free men, free of speech and flourishing, enjoying good repute where their mother is concerned.

<sup>173</sup> See Miller 2005: 83 n. 78; see also Gantz 1993: 283-4 who suggests that both Demophon and Akamas were Antiope's children under 'an older tradition and were transferred to Phaidra at a later point.' See also Gantz 1993:284, n. 13 - Stesichorus made Demophon the son of Theseus and Iope, 'and Akamas Theseus' son by a second woman whose name is lost (...)'. This uncertainty could have been the reason why Euripides does not name Phaedra's children specifically in *Hipp.* but relies on the spectators' familiarity with the myths to make their own inferences. Alternatively, it could be that there was no particular significance in naming (or not naming) Phaedra's children in *Hipp.* Notably, the two boys are named as sons of Phaedra by Theseus in (the later) Apollodorus *Epitome* 1.16-19.

<sup>174</sup> In mythology, Akamas and Demophon rule as joint kings of Athens. (See Gantz 1993).

<sup>175</sup> But note the Nurse's contrary view that Phaedra's death would result in a betrayal of her sons (305-6); that the sons should benefit from their father's inheritance is a view that the Nurse considers important. Such benefits could include the eventual bestowal of Theseus' kingship upon them (306-7).

Phaedra suggests that her death will, first, not bring shame to her children and husband, and secondly, will guarantee her boys' futures by ensuring they live as 'free men', enjoying a high reputation in terms of who their mother was – despite her Cretan origins and her family history. In the context of Phaedra's own perceptions of her role as mother of Theseus' sons, it appears then that her marriage to the Troezenian king and her 'escape' from Crete are enough to secure her future reputation in a way that remaining in Crete (with her ambiguous family history) would have prevented her from doing.

It is equally interesting to note the level of importance that Theseus himself places on his sons and heirs. At 798, on his return to Troezen, the Chorus gives him the news of the 'death of the young', whereupon the king immediately assumes that harm has befallen his sons:

Oh no! Surely it is not my sons whose lives I am robbed of?

Theseus appears to be referring to these sons by Phaedra as his legitimate children and heirs.<sup>176</sup> If we consider 719-20 together:

for I shall never disgrace my Cretan home nor shall I go  
to face Theseus with shameful deeds against my name,

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<sup>176</sup> Sommerstein 1988:32 also takes this reference to Theseus' sons to mean 'his legitimate children and heirs, the sons of Phaidra (cf. μητρὸς, 800).'

we observe from these lines that the two elements of 'not disgracing her Cretan home' and 'facing Theseus' are part of the same sentiment connected with Phaedra's *aidos*, her sense of, above all, safeguarding the reputation of the royal house of Troezen, even if it means sacrificing her own life. This particular aspect of *aidos* as displayed by Phaedra in 717-9 becomes a motivating factor reflecting the queen's desire to secure the good name of her royal household (which includes her half-Cretan sons). This act has the effect, all at once, of ensuring her sons' ultimate succession to the throne of Athens as well as reinforcing her own roles both as their mother, and 'unifier' of her native Crete and her adopted Troezen. As considered later in the context of the protagonists sailing from and to each of these regions, Phaedra's roles here could also be seen to connect them together.

Phaedra's role as mother to Theseus' sons (and the importance that she herself places on her role in that capacity) is, I propose, significant in terms of Euripides' construct of Cretan-ness. As we can discern, Phaedra places great importance on the reputation she will bequeath to her sons, as well as her role as mother to the future kings of Athens. Phaedra's transformation from princess from the peripheries of the Greek world to mother of future kings of Athens marks her elevation from the margins to the centre. As we will see when considering the various plays together, Euripides appears to consider the position of Crete from different, contrasting

perspectives.<sup>177</sup> In *Hippolytus*, Euripides first turns his lens on a Cretan character with Athenian connections- in Troezen. In this way, Euripides appears to triangulate the comparison between Athens and Crete by setting the events of this play in a third space, Troezen. So, the boundaries between 'centre' and periphery which first appear as being represented by Athens and Crete, respectively, become blurred with the setting of a Cretan character in Troezen. In this way, the periphery is seen to be found 'on' the mainland. In this work, 'the periphery' is significant: it is accorded a high status in the form of Phaedra as mother to the kings of Athens. In *The Cretans*, the focus is on Phaedra's past; we find ourselves in the palace of her parents, Minos and Pasiphae. But this same Crete is also the place where the future Athenian kings have their roots. Their mother, Phaedra, was born in this court. In this regard, Athens' future is inextricably linked with Crete's (and Phaedra's) past. We also note this theme in the next play, *Theseus*. There, we learn of Theseus' imminent arrival in Crete from Attica. Theseus will vanquish his opponents in Crete and return a hero to Athens. Upon his return, he will marry Phaedra, and their sons will become kings of Athens. And so in this way, the present, past and future appear to become linked through the three works, as do the fates of Crete and Athens where the centre appears to merge with the periphery- and vice versa. These dynamics of the centre *v.* the periphery, and the metaphorical merging of one with the other are considered in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6 in the context of

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<sup>177</sup> Although I refer to three specific plays in this context (*Hipp.*, *The Cretans* and *Theseus*), they are not intended to suggest a trilogy. Rather, this is more an observation on how the theme of Crete is treated in each work and the possible interconnections that could be implied between them.

insularity. The paradigm of separation and interconnectivity in its various forms becomes, as we shall see, another discernible element in thinking about the idea of insularity.

In summary, the main points arising from passage 715-721 are as follows:

First, there appears to deliberate ambiguity in Phaedra's reference to her 'Cretan home'. This could be an allusion to the fame that Crete enjoyed from epic onwards, and so, the need to remind the audience of that connection which is worth defending. The 'Cretan home' reference could also be to Phaedra's current status as mother to her half-Cretan sons. Phaedra's stated desire of not wanting to disgrace her Cretan home could stem from her strong sense of *aidos* which requires that she safeguard the reputation of her half-Cretan sons by Theseus, themselves future kings of Athens. As mother to the future kings, Phaedra can be seen to reinforce the links between Crete and Athens.

Taken as a whole, Phaedra's actions often appear ambiguous. The Chorus glorifies Phaedra's Cretan roots and praises their queen, and yet it is the princess (under the power of Aphrodite) who is ultimately responsible for the calamity brought upon the House of Theseus. A tension is discernible between the queen's 'good' and 'bad' actions. On the one hand, Phaedra comes across as *not* particularly Cretan at all. Her 'illicit desire' could be viewed not as something bestial or outlandish, but expressed as an attraction for someone who is off limits, and stimulated by

Aphrodite, the goddess of love. She struggles against this desire, appealing to the women from Troezen for support, placing herself in a tradition of virtuous women who find themselves trapped in a situation that is not of their own making – and one that goes back to the *Odyssey* and epic. On the other hand, the queen's desires are different from most other virtuous women's, more akin to her mother's unnatural love for a bull than to Clytemnestra's attraction for Agamemnon's fellow murderer. We can perhaps note here the notion of a 'pull backwards' exerted on Cretan women by their past and their roots.<sup>178</sup> The ambiguity in Phaedra's nature can also be extended to the ambiguity with which Crete is perceived. Such facets of character and their potential for interpretation, tie in with aspects of the concept of an island in fifth-century thought. Islands and their inhabitants were perceived as a mixed blessing, as 'a continuum between complete independence and complete integration with the outside world'.<sup>179</sup> The idea of the ambiguity associated with the island of Crete as reflected in its characters will be studied in other passages in *Hippolytus*, as well as other plays, to gauge if they emerge there.

### 2.3 Explicit and implicit references to Crete in *Hippolytus*

Having previously considered the more obvious ways in which Euripides portrays Phaedra as Cretan, in this section I consider the more implicit, nuanced allusions to Crete and Cretan-ness in the same play.

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<sup>178</sup> A reference to the title of Reckford's (1974) article on Pasiphae and Phaedra 'The Pull Backward'.

<sup>179</sup> Broodbank 2000: 10; this idea of an island as a 'continuum' is considered more fully in Chapters 5 and 6.

The emphasis that the poet places on portraying Phaedra as Cretan has been established previously. However, it can further be noted that Euripides also paints a canvas in which Phaedra's surroundings (which form the Troezenian setting of the play) are given subtle Cretan hues in terms of landscape as well as the presence of Cretan gods and spirits. This broader articulation in various ways of a 'Cretan presence in Troezen' subtly reinforces Phaedra's own Cretan nature; her provenance is emphasized as if to explain the origins and nature of her actions.

We can discern a sense of Cretanism which is internalized in the character of Phaedra, as well as externalized in the landscape. At the same time, this Crete is also 'unreal', both as imagined landscape and an island physically distant from the mainland, an 'other world'.<sup>180</sup> Crete becomes ethereal and abstruse – perhaps portrayed more as a state of mind than a physical reality.

In this section, I examine the passages in which, I suggest, more implicit references to Crete and Cretans can be found in *Hippolytus*. These involve the lines 141-4, 145-50, 228-31, and 1131-4. Each is taken in sequence.

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<sup>180</sup> Distance from Athens matters; e.g. see the hypothesis on *Theseus* 381: Crete's location is described as 'Nearly on the very fringes of Europe.' (Cropp and Collard 2008a:421 and n. <sup>1</sup>).

### 2.3.1 Lines 141-4

I begin with an analysis of the passage by the Chorus at *Hippolytus* 141-4:

ἦ γὰρ ἔνθεος, ὦ κούρα<sup>181</sup>,  
εἴτ' ἐκ Πανὸς εἴθ' Ἑκάτας  
ἦ σεμνῶν Κορυβάντων  
φοιτᾶς ἦ ματρὸς ὀρεΐας;

Has some god, Pan or Hecate, possessed you, dear  
girl? Do your wits wander under the spell of the august  
Corybantes or the mountain mother?<sup>182</sup>

Lines 141-4 are part of the *parados*, the long choral song (122-69) of the Women of Troezen in which they express their concern for the well-being of their queen. They ponder the state of Phaedra's health and ask why she is on a fast which can only end in death.

The Chorus name four specific gods and spirits known to cause these states of possession and madness, Pan and Hecate, the Corybantes and the Mountain Mother,

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<sup>181</sup> As noted in 1.4, *Hipp.* 141 is an example of differences in interpretation between the Loeb edition (Kovacs 1995) and the *Oxford Classical Text* (Diggle 1984). While this study retains Kovacs' text (based on Nauck's conjecture; see Kovacs 1995:137), Diggle prints what is found in the manuscripts in his main text: ἦ σὺ γὰρ ἔνθεος, ὦ κούρα. Halleran (1995:163), while retaining Diggle's text, suggests that the 'mss. reading, σὺ γὰρ, is unmetrical.'

<sup>182</sup> While Kovacs 1995 translates this line using common nouns i.e. 'the mountain mother', Collard and Cropp 2008a in *The Cretans*.f472.12 render the term instead as 'the mountain Mother'. I have described the spirit using the proper nouns, 'the Mountain Mother'.



at 142-4.<sup>183</sup> They also equate Phaedra's current state to 'delirium', to being possessed by spirits and having a 'frenzied' mind.<sup>184</sup>

Of the four spirits mentioned in lines 143-4, two in particular, the Corybantes and the Mountain Mother, have specific Cretan connections, as can be discerned from Euripides' other works. For example, a direct connection can be seen between the Corybantes and Crete in Euripides' *The Bacchae*; a reference which provides possibly the first direct association in the poet's works between the spirits and the island of Phaedra's origins. Here in lines 120-5, as elsewhere in Euripides, the Corybantes and the Curetes are invoked in the context of Zeus' cultic worship in Crete:<sup>185</sup>

ὦ θαλάμευμα Κουρή-	120
των ζάθεοί τε Κρήτας	
Διογενέτορες ἔναυλοι,	
ἐνθα τρικόρυθες ἄντροις	
βυρσότονον κύκλωμα τόδε	
μοι Κορύβαντες ἡὔρον·	125

Oh lair of the Kouretes and sacred Zeus-begetting haunts of  
Crete, where the triple-helmeted Korybantes in the cave invented  
for me this hide-stretched circle.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> See Race 1997: 252-3 and n. 2 for a further discussion on Pan and Hecate, and madness; also, see Kovacs 1995: 139 n. <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>184</sup> Or 'folly' (*LSJ* 2007: 121), ἀφροσύνας at 164.

<sup>185</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 539 note 5.

<sup>186</sup> Trans. Seaford 1996: 74-5; 163.

In *The Bacchae*, the Corybantes are depicted in the context of Zeus' birth in the 'haunts of Crete' which, judging by the account provided by Euripides in *The Cretans*, could refer to the Idaean Mountains and the god's birth-cave on Crete.

We note a reference to the Idaean cult of Zeus on Crete in the fragment *The Cretans*

f472.9-15:<sup>187</sup>

ἀγνὸν δὲ βίον τείνομεν ἐξ οὗ	
Διὸς Ἰδαίου μύστης γενόμεν	10
καὶ νυκτιπόλου Ζεγρέως Βούτης	
τὰς ὠμοφάγους δαῖτας τελέσας,	
Μητρί τ' ὀρεΐα δᾶδας ἀνασχών	
μετὰ Κουρήτων	
Βάκχος ἐκλήθην ὀσιωθείς.	15

Pure is the life I have  
led since I became an initiate of Idaean Zeus and a servitor  
of night-ranging Zagreus, performing his feasts of raw  
flesh; and raising torches high to the mountain Mother  
among the Curetes, I was consecrated and named a celebrant.

The Curetes were the guardians of the boy Zeus; they were themselves divinities as well as being worshippers impersonating the divinities as part of cult worship.

In *Hippolytus*, too, as we saw earlier, the references to the Corybantes at 143 and to Zeus at 683, if taken together, suggest allusions to the god's cult in Crete.

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<sup>187</sup> See Chapter 3 for a detailed analysis of this work.

So far, then, in at least three of Euripides' works, *Hippolytus*, *The Bacchae*, and *The Cretans*, associations can be discerned between Cretan spirits such as the Corybantes and Curetes in the context of Zeus worship on Crete.

Next, the Mountain Mother, *ματρώς ὀρεΐας*, at *Hippolytus* 144, is also referred to in Euripides' fragment, *The Cretans*, 472.13 as *Μητροί ... ὀρεΐα*, 'the mountain Mother', here, in an obviously Cretan setting of the play. In *The Cretans*, the Mountain Mother appears to be Rhea, Zeus' own mother, merged with an original Phrygian goddess, Cybele.<sup>188</sup>

The Chorus attributes blame to the Cretan spirits (amongst others) as being responsible for Phaedra's frenzied state of mind at *Hippolytus* 141-4. So, a connection between the spirits and madness can be discerned. As Kovacs suggests: '[t]he mountain Mother, Cybele, and her divine ministers the Corybantes were thought to afflict people with madness'.<sup>189</sup> The Corybantes' important status is alluded to by the epithet 'august'<sup>190</sup> or 'holy'<sup>191</sup> at 143. So, the Corybantes and the Mountain Mother (from 143-4) provide a link, albeit an implicit one, between Phaedra, her

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<sup>188</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 539 n. 5.

<sup>189</sup> See Kovacs 1995:139 n. <sup>a</sup>

<sup>190</sup> Trans. Kovacs 1995:137.

<sup>191</sup> Trans Halleran 1995: 73; see also Barrett 2001: 189 n. 141-4.

delirium, and her native Crete.<sup>192</sup> It appears from these references to the Corybantes and the Mountain Mother that the poet is weaving into the fabric of the *Hippolytus* story elements that are recognisably Cretan, these spirits being the agents of the madness afflicting Phaedra.

In summary, from 141-4, two spirits with a Cretan provenance, the Corybantes and the Mountain Mother, are said to be the cause of Phaedra's madness. In line with other references to these spirits in Euripides', these two Cretan spirits are often invoked with reference to Zeus' cultic worship on Crete. So the reference to them in this passage emphasizes both Phaedra's Cretan-ness and also suggests that the spirits, as Cretan elements, might be present in Troezen itself as causing the princess' madness.

### 2.3.2 Lines 145-50

The next set of lines analyzed here are 145-150; they are a continuation of the previous passage and still part of the choral ode:

ἄρ' ἀμφὶ τὰν πολύθηρον<sup>193</sup>                      145  
 Δίκτυνναν ἀμπλακίαις  
 ἀνίερος ἀθύτων πελανῶν τρύχη;  
 φοιτᾷ γὰρ καὶ διὰ Λίμνας

<sup>192</sup> They were also known to have established an ecstatic ritual in Athens in which 'possession' was deliberately induced as a cure for mental disorders. See Barrett 2001: 189 n. 141-4; Dodds 1968: 77.

<sup>193</sup> As noted in 1.4, *Hipp.* 145 is another example of differences in interpretation between the Loeb edition (Kovacs 1995) and the *Oxford Classical Text* (Diggle 1984). Diggle prints the phrase in this line as the more problematic τὸ δ' ἄμφι (found in the manuscripts). Meanwhile, Halleran (1995:163) agrees that the 'meter of τὸ δ' is acceptable, but the sense of δέ is difficult'.

χέρσον θ' ὕπερ πελάγους  
δίναις ἐν νοτίαις ἄλμας. 150

Are you being worn down for some fault against Dictynna of the wild  
beasts, having failed to offer her the holy batter? For  
she also haunts the Lake and passes over the dry land in  
the sea, that stands in the eddies of the surf.

This time, the Women of Troezen attribute the cause of Phaedra's delirium to  
Dictynna, a Cretan equivalent to Artemis- the identities of the two goddesses are  
separate but can, at times, be merged, as is the case here.<sup>194</sup> Two different elements  
relating to Dictynna can be identified in 145-50, and each is discussed in turn:

- (a) the reference to 'Dictynna of the wild Beasts', πολύθηρος Δίκτυννας, at 146;
- (b) the references to Dictynna's other domains, 'the Lake' and 'the dry land in the  
sea', Λίμνας χέρσον θ' ὕπερ πελάγους, at 148-9.

There are associations between Dictynna and the island of Crete, established  
elsewhere in Euripides' works.<sup>195</sup> Dictynna, who is often invoked with Artemis in  
*Hippolytus*, is also known as a Cretan spirit of the wild.<sup>196</sup> The goddess is often  
regarded as the 'Cretan Artemis of the wild'.<sup>197</sup> A similar epithet, 'Dictynna of the

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<sup>194</sup> See Kovacs 1995: 139 n.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>195</sup> See Cook 1940: 541– 'Dictynna was a Cretan form of the mountain-mother, whose name probably  
hangs together with that of Mount Dickte or Dikton.' See also Cook 1940: 541 n. 5 & 6. One of  
Dictynna's epithets is Δίκτυνναν οὐρεία Euripides *IT* 126), closely resembling the epithet to the  
Mountain Mother met earlier in *Hipp.* 144: ἡ ματὶς οὐρείας.

<sup>196</sup> See Ferguson 1995: 53 n. 145

<sup>197</sup> See Barrett 2001: 189-90 n. 145-7

wild beasts' at 145-6, πολύθηρος Δίκτυννας, refers back to something similar on Artemis from *Il.* 21.470-1.<sup>198</sup>

τὸν δὲ κασιγνήτη μάλα νεΐκεσε πότνια θηρῶ  
Ἄρτεμις ἀγροτέρη, .

But his sister, Artemis of the wild, the lady of wild of beasts,  
scolded him bitterly.<sup>199</sup>

It could be suggested from 145-6 that Euripides appears to be representing Artemis in a Cretan context by referring to the goddess as Dictynna.<sup>200</sup> It is known that Dictynna's worship was especially prominent in Crete.<sup>201</sup> It is also significant that it is the Chorus of the Women of Troezen who invoke the Cretan Dictynna in Troezen, both implying their familiarity with the goddess and envisaging her as being present in their land. It appears that Dictynna, like the Corybantes and the Mountain Mother earlier, is being invoked in this passage in connection with Phaedra's madness. So, we have in Troezen Cretan spirits and gods who are presented as inflicting Phaedra with madness.

There is another connection between the goddess and Crete which a fifth-century audience might have been familiar with – in myth there is a connection between Dictynna and Phaedra's father, Minos, who pursued the goddess for nine months

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<sup>198</sup> See Halleran 1995: 163 n. 145-7

<sup>199</sup> Trans. Lattimore 1961: 430

<sup>200</sup> As noted previously, they are two separate identities who can sometimes be merged.

<sup>201</sup> See Segal 1986: 174 and n.18. See also Ellinger 2009:26, who suggests that there were two Cretan versions of Artemis: Britomartis in the east of the island, and Dictynna in the west.

before she plunged into the sea to escape him.<sup>202</sup> In this way, Dictynna is associated with both Minos and his daughter, Phaedra. So, the Cretan goddess appears to be invoked in Troezen through a family connection, but also as being the cause of Phaedra's delirium. The audience's familiarity with aspects of the Minos-Dictynna myths might have reinforced their perceptions of the latter in a Cretan context.

Barrett suggests, when commenting on lines 145-7, that Dictynna is invoked in her capacity as goddess of the wild (as also at line 1130), and that although the goddess' Cretan name is used, this has no connection with Phaedra being Cretan.<sup>203</sup> On the contrary, I suggest that it is significant that Euripides associates Artemis' Cretan aspect, Dictynna, both with Phaedra (at 146), and later, with Hippolytus (at 1130). This association with both protagonists suggests a mirroring in the states of mind in both Phaedra, in her 'madness', and Hippolytus, in his irrational and complete devotion to Artemis/Dictynna. We begin to find aspects of Phaedra in Hippolytus and vice versa. These similar traits, interconnections in speech, actions and attitudes shared by Phaedra and Hippolytus have previously been discussed at length by scholars.<sup>204</sup> For the purposes of this study, however, such interconnections are

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<sup>202</sup> See Halleran 1995: 163 n. 145-7; Rosenquist 1978: 54-5 cf. Callimachus *Hymn to Artemis* 3.189-200 (trans. Mair 1931).

<sup>203</sup> See Barrett 2001: 190 n. 145-7. Part of Barrett's assertion is based on his findings that 'nor is there evidence for D. as an actual cult-title at Troezen.' However, as I have shown, in *Hipp.* Euripides associates Dictynna's name with other Cretan spirits and gods.

<sup>204</sup> See Reckford 1974: 327; Knox 1983: 330, and Zeitlin 1996: 224 and n. 13, who talks of their 'inextricable nexus of interdependence'.

deemed important in another sense- that they provide insights into how spirits as Cretan elements, appear in Troezen.

So, in summary, we see that a Cretan goddess (Dictynna) as well as Cretan spirits (the Mountain Mother and the Corybantes) play important roles in the way the character of Phaedra and her Cretan origins are alluded to in the work. This passage 145-50 highlights the notion that the goddess Dictynna is connected to Crete in several ways: first, Euripides invokes Dictynna as the Cretan version of Artemis. The Cretan goddess is, in turn, contextualised as one possible cause of Phaedra's delirium. Secondly, a connection can be discerned between Dictynna and Minos from mythological accounts; the poet could be alluding to this association in the passage, given the Cretan links of goddess and protagonist.

So, the notion that surfaces from an examination of these passages is that there is a mirroring in the gods and spirits as well as in the protagonists. By invoking aspects of Crete in Troezen the poet appears, first, to reinforce Phaedra's own Cretan origins; however, Euripides also blurs and problematizes certain distinctions between the two regions. By positing the Cretan Phaedra, not in Crete, but in faraway Troezen, Euripides appears to temper the degree of her Cretan-ness. This particular nuanced



portrayal of Cretanism is perhaps part of the wider features of a Euripidean interest in complicating the polarities of otherness – Cretan *v* Greek, man *v* woman etc.<sup>205</sup>

There is also a sense that elements of faraway Crete are present in Troezen – the ‘other’ is in fact, nearer to ‘us’ than we think. The suggestion that Crete is as much a state of mind as it is a physical location is one theme that emerges here (and in the other ‘Cretan plays’, as I shall demonstrate later in this study).

### 2.3.3 Lines 228-31 and 1131-4

Several passages in *Hippolytus* evoke strong associations between Dictynna and watery landscapes. These references are often in the context of Phaedra’s madness. The goddess appears to have a presence both in Troezen and the land of Phaedra’s origins, Crete. The next passage analysed in the context of Dictynna’s domain over water is 148-150, discussed here together with 238-31 and 1131-4:

φοιτᾷ γὰρ καὶ διὰ Λίμνας  
χέρσον θ’ ὕπερ πελάγους  
δίναις ἐν νοτίαις ἄλμας.

For she also haunts the Lake and passes over the dry land in the sea,  
that stands in the eddies of the surf.

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<sup>205</sup> See Hall :1992: 221-3 for a discussion on Euripides and his bases for highlighting polarities, the overturning of orthodoxy and ‘inversion’ of ‘moral statuses’. The added interest in tempering and complicating polarities (including in the ‘Cretan plays’) is to make the resulting work more nuanced and multi-layered in terms of discerning meaning.

The Chorus previously highlighted the Dictynna-Artemis connections in terms of nature and mountains; here in 147-50 they refer to Dictynna's dominion over lakes, sands and eddies. Barrett proposes that the *καί* in line 148 indicates the goddess' presence *here* as in other lands.<sup>206</sup> If 'here' refers to Troezen, then one of the 'other lands' where she is present could be Crete, the island connected with Phaedra. Barrett also suggests that the Lake 'is *one* of the places she haunts', the others being the sands and eddies, but also the mountains and the wild generally.

At 228-31, we find Phaedra in her continuing state of 'delirium', invoking Artemis:

δέσποιν' ἄλίας Ἄρτεμι Λίμνας  
καὶ γυμνασίων τῶν ἵπποκρότων,  
εἴθε γενοίμαν ἐν σοῖς δαπέδοις  
πώλους Ἐνετὰς δαμαλιζομένα.

Mistress of the Salt Lake, Artemis, mistress of the  
coursing ground for horses, O that I might find myself on your  
plains taming Venetian colts!

These lines are part of the expression of Phaedra's 'delirium', where the queen finally speaks to the Nurse about her desires, although these remain incomprehensible to the latter. The audience, however, would be right in interpreting these words by Phaedra as an expression of her deeper desire to be with Hippolytus in the places he loves to frequent. Phaedra longs to be in locations

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<sup>206</sup> Barrett 2001: 190 n. 148-50.

associated with him, and to engage with him in riding and taming horses (as in these lines).<sup>207</sup> Artemis is invoked here at line 228 as ‘Mistress of the Salt Lake’ in the same context (of the Salt Lake) as Dictynna at 148-50, the epithet emphasizing the landscape.

At 1126-34, we also note that the Chorus returns to the idea of Dictynna’s domain over the Lake, this time with reference to Hippolytus:

ὦ ψάμαθοι πολιήτιδος ἀκτᾶς,<sup>208</sup>  
ὦ δρυμὸς ὄρεος ὅθι κυνῶν  
ὠκυπόδων μέτα θήρας ἔναιον  
Δίκτυνναν ἀμφὶ σεμνάν.  
οὐκέτι συζυγίαν πώλων Ἐνετᾶν ἐπιβάσῃ  
τὸν ἀμφὶ Λίμνας τρόχον κατέχων ποδὶ γυμνάδος ἵππου.

O sands of our city’s shore,  
O mountain thickets where with his swift hounds he slew  
The wild beasts in company with holy Dictynna!  
No more shall you mount behind a pair of Venetian  
horses and tread the race course about the Mere with the  
feet of your racing steeds.<sup>209</sup>

Here, the Chorus, having just heard Theseus’ pronouncement banishing Hippolytus from Troezen, recounts the favourite haunts of their young master. They recall his

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<sup>207</sup> Critics also view this symbolically as representing the sexual act itself; see Halleran 1995: 168 n. 198-266, cont’d.

<sup>208</sup> As noted in 1.4, *Hipp.* 1126-34 is another example of differences in interpretation between the Loeb edition (Kovacs 1995) and the *Oxford Classical Text* (Diggle 1984). While this study retains Kovacs’ interpretation (a combination of the emendations of Barrett and Musgrave; Kovacs 1995:231 n.<sup>a</sup>) that all the nine lines are delivered by the Chorus, Diggle and others suggest that there is a switch from the *therapontes* to the female chorus from line 1131 onwards. Halleran (1995:247) appears to agree with Diggle and others by suggesting that the use of οὐκέτι at line 1131 ‘is the opening word of the antistrophe and strophe’.

<sup>209</sup> I have used the more commonplace ‘Lake’ rather than the more archaic ‘Mere’ (Kovacs 1995: 233) in my discussions.

associations with woods, horses and hunting. Here, the reference is again to the Cretan version of Artemis: Dictynna, who is also the goddess of woodland and nature.

Several points are noteworthy here which are evaluated in turn:

The 'Mere' or 'Lake' at line 1132 plausibly recalls the same one referred to at 148-9 and 228, all invoked in terms of either Artemis or Dictynna, reinforcing both versions of the goddess' domain over shores and beaches. On a first reading, the landscape corresponds to the coastal region of Troezen traditionally associated as Hippolytus' haunts and recalled by the Chorus at 1131-4.<sup>210</sup> It would appear that the goddess who might have incited 'madness' in Phaedra earlier (146) could also be the same goddess who might now exert an influence on Hippolytus (1130-1), given that she is also mistress of 'your plains'.<sup>211</sup> Dictynna-Artemis appears to have a hand in the frenzied states of mind of both Phaedra and Hippolytus. In this context, the goddess could be seen to be the link between Phaedra's region, Crete, and Hippolytus' Troezen, both of which are part of the goddess' domain.

In summary, taking all three passages 147-50, 228-3 and 1131-4 together, the landscape evoked is of salt marshes, sandy beaches and dunes. Both Artemis and

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<sup>210</sup> On the location and topography of the area in Troezen where Hippolytus exercises his horses, see Barrett 2001: 383.

<sup>211</sup> Barrett 2001:190 n. 148-50 'her power is not confined to Crete'

Dictynna, in turn, are associated with this seascape. I suggest that the poet highlights these connections deliberately in order to create, in the audience's mind, strong associations with Phaedra's home landscape on Crete. The island is of course, already well-known from epic as part of Odysseus' Lying Tales.<sup>212</sup> The island is also invoked in Homer as a place which conjures up images of the sea, long coastlines, and a rugged interior.<sup>213</sup> The use of allusions to Crete is especially relevant here as a means of linking Phaedra and her origins. In fact, there appears only a few lines later, at 155-7, a sea-related reference to Crete: a Cretan mariner crossing the seas in search of Phaedra in Troezen, as if to highlight the latter's origins by renewing her Cretan connections.

Another parallel that can be drawn between the two regions is in terms of the nature of events that unfold in both regions. The land- and seascapes of Troezen and Crete could also be perceived as marginal zones where unusual events take place (e.g. the killing of Hippolytus by the bull from the sea at Troezen, and Theseus' elopement with Ariadne from Crete).<sup>214</sup> The coast, seas and the Cretan landscape are also in-between zones where the bizarre is known to thrive (e.g. Pasiphae's passion for a

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<sup>212</sup> Esp. *Od.* 3.288; 14.199; 19.172-9; (in particular the treacherous seas and coasts, rugged mountains and inclement weather of Crete are evoked in these passages). The evocation of the island from epic might have provided the Athenian spectator of Euripides' 'Cretan plays' (including *Hipp.*) with a general impression of the island's landscape and nature.

<sup>213</sup> E.g. see Haft 1981 esp. 50, 132-3

<sup>214</sup> 'Marginal/marginality' is taken to refer to in-between zones, both physical (e.g. the coast of Crete as being in between land and sea) and metaphorical (e.g. protagonists and creatures such as the Minotaur displaying aspects of both animal and human). The notion of marginality is considered at greater length in Chapter 5.

bull, the Minotaur in the labyrinth, as exemplified in other fragmentary plays of Euripides, *The Cretans* and *Theseus*). The notions of the bizarre and of marginality appear as other facets in the fifth-century construct of insularity.<sup>215</sup> I consider this theme further in Chapter 5 where I suggest further that Troezenian and Cretan elements are blended together, not only in the context of the gods and spirits but also their landscape, seascape, as well as the protagonists' actions.

## 2.4 Aspects of Crete in Troezen

So far, several distinct themes have emerged as part of Euripides' representation of Cretanism in *Hippolytus*, in which specific ideas appear to emerge. Taking the different groups of selected passages together (i.e. lines 155-60, 715-721 and 752-763), the following main points can be noted from their analysis.

Cretan spirits are invoked in Troezen – specifically, the Corybantes and the Mountain Mother, both in the context of Cretan Phaedra. These ancient spirits, associated in fifth-century constructs with aspects of Cretan religion, are also summoned up by Euripides in *The Cretans* (and discussed in Chapter 3). Cretan mountain spirits, then, appear as a theme in these works of Euripides.

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<sup>215</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007 esp. Ch. 1.

The goddess Dictynna is represented as connected to Crete in several ways: first, Euripides invokes Dictynna as being associated with Artemis. The Chorus suggests that the Cretan goddess could be one possible cause of Phaedra's delirium. Next, there is an allusion to a link between Dictynna and Minos from other mythological accounts; the poet could also be alluding to this connection in the passage in order to reiterate the goddess' obvious Cretan origins. So, there are at least two strands connecting Dictynna to Crete.

Next, lakes, sand, beaches and eddies, aspects of a marginal landscape, locations on the edge of both land and water, are features occurring in the three passages. This marginal nature of the physical landscape mirrors the extraordinary events and behaviour which unfold in *Hippolytus*. Crete, the island, is also very much a marginal zone between land and water where unusual events unfold in quick succession (as I elaborate in Chapter 5, on insularity). Cretan characters such as Phaedra (and Pasiphae, as we shall see later) appear to mirror this marginality in their behaviour. If Euripides' construct of Cretan-ness includes this aspect of mirroring of marginal landscapes and states of mind, it suggests how both landscape and human behaviour can impact on one another.

Together with the invocation of graphic sea-related imagery of ships, mariners, sailing and anchoring and the rope with which Phaedra hangs herself, the sea also

reinforces more popular fifth-century Athenian notions of Crete in terms of its myth-historical fame as a sea-faring nation.

Bovine imagery is also represented: Phaedra evokes a familiar Cretan theme from myth, the Cretan bull, which resurfaces in various guises at *Hippolytus* 337-8. The poet also uses this particular idea repeatedly in his representation of Cretanism in various other works, as will be discussed later in Chapters 3 and 4.

Next, in analyzing the five different passages, I have noted that in no fewer than three of them (155-60; 362-72; 752-63) it is the Chorus (of the Women of Troezen) who refer to Phaedra's Cretan connections. In the other two (337-43; 715-21), it is Phaedra who refers to herself in a Cretan context. This emphasis on particular elements of the identities of each (the Chorus, Phaedra) has the effect of suggesting differences between 'Troezen' and 'Cretan', equated to difference and separation. However, Phaedra's presence in Troezen (and the fact that the Chorus accepts her as their queen) could also allude to the strengthening of ties between Crete and Troezen, that is, between the island and the mainland.

Finally, another theme emerging from the passages is concealment and revelation: after having kept her passion for Hippolytus secret, Phaedra finally reveals all to the Nurse. This revelation of Phaedra's secret contrasts with its antithesis, concealment, since for a considerable period- the queen refused to reveal the cause of her unhappy



state. The presence and the juxtaposition of silence, secrecy and concealment, on the one hand, and speech and revelation on the other, appear as one of the key characteristics in the construct of Euripides' Crete.<sup>216</sup> In the context of Cretanism, these elements of secrecy and revelation might reflect some wider political and social concerns of fifth-century Athenians.<sup>217</sup>

Considering the implications of these themes more generally, we note that certain of Phaedra's character traits appear somewhat changeable - in other words, her characteristics of secrecy and revelation could have arisen out of her displacement and alienation from her native Crete and her place as a princess in Minos' court, to her elevation as queen of Troezen and Theseus' consort and mother to two future kings of Athens. These roles in turn reflect a potential polarity- one that ostensibly emphasizes distance and difference, but also, conversely, closeness and the strengthening of bonds between Crete and Troezen.

The references by the Chorus to Phaedra as Κρησία, 'Cretan girl' at lines 372 and at 752 could be compared to other references to 'foreigners' in Euripides' other works, in order to consider where Euripides' Cretanism sits in his construct of identity. For example, in *Medea*, the protagonist is from Colchis, considered to be a barbarian and

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<sup>216</sup> See Montiglio 2000 for an interesting study on the place of silence from epic onwards (and including tragedy).

<sup>217</sup> See Goff 1990: 13 and n. 16 'The opposition between concealment and revelation (...) can be related to some of the political and cultural concerns of fifth-century Athens, and to its growing awareness of the possible tensions between the public and private lives of its citizens.'

a sorceress, of 'wild character' and 'hateful temper' (lines 101-2), features that appear to reinforce her foreign-ness and those that account for the extreme, untempered courses of action she embarks upon.<sup>218</sup> Certain similarities and differences can be drawn to the Phaedra in *Hippolytus*: in Medea's case, her barbarian provenance appears to lie at the heart of how difference between Greek and non-Greek is articulated. In the case of Phaedra, as we saw previously, her identity is much more subtly nuanced in terms of differences between Troezenian, Athenian and Cretan. Although Phaedra is referred to as 'Cretan girl' any differences that might be perceived between her and the Troezenian Chorus/Court, or indeed, the Athenian Theseus, or the half-Amazonian Hippolytus, are not made obvious (as in the case of *Medea*). Certainly Phaedra's disruptive and transgressive role could be explained by her status as an 'outsider' but nowhere is she described as 'barbarian', along the lines that Medea is.<sup>219</sup> So, Phaedra's (nuanced) 'outsider' status could be seen as part of the paradigm of otherness, possibly based on provenance related to geographical boundaries of the Greek world (whether perceived or actual), or for that matter, the result of how Euripides and the other playwrights manipulated and restated the myths for the purposes of shaping and enhancing the tragic plot itself and the effectiveness of the drama on stage.

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<sup>218</sup> Morwood (trans.) (1998: 4); Hall 1992: 54

<sup>219</sup> Hall 1992: 170

Similar also to certain aspects of *Hippolytus* (described and discussed earlier) are the roles of Aphrodite/Cypris as the cause of misfortune (at *Medea* 527, 630 – and, interestingly, also at *Trojan Women* 940-50). The role of Aphrodite in causing the downfall of both Hippolytus and Phaedra is one of the key elements in *Hippolytus* and one that has colossal repercussions - resulting in Phaedra taking her own life -, and so it is interesting to note that in *Medea* too, Aphrodite plays a similar role in invoking high passion, resulting in Medea wreaking revenge on Jason, murdering Glaucus and Creon and of course, perhaps most brutally, killing their two children.

It is also noteworthy that another parallel in both *Hippolytus* and *Medea* are the high regard with which both Phaedra and Medea place on the importance of Greece/Athens. We saw earlier how Phaedra described Athens as ‘glorious’ (at *Hipp.* 760); and Medea expresses similar praise for the rule of law enshrined within the Greek world (at *Medea* 536-8; the Chorus of Corinthian Women also echo this in *Medea* by singing in celebration of the city-state ‘where all is wisdom, culture, and love.’ [at 824-50].<sup>220</sup> The various references to Athens could appear to serve a few purposes: first, given the fact that the works were performed in Athenian space, that it was intended as praise for the audience’s city and would sit well with their sense of pride for their city. Secondly, it could also be seen as a means of contrasting that

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<sup>220</sup> Morwood (1998): 176

‘other’ world of Phaedra (Crete) and Medea (Iolchus) with Athens/the Greek world.

Apart from showing up the differences in the respective cultures of the two (non-Athenian) protagonists, it also could go some way towards explaining their somewhat extreme respective patterns of behaviour, with Medea murdering her children and Phaedra’s illicit love for her step-son (a trait possibly inherited from Pasiphae, her mother, whose act of bestiality with a bull is equally infamous).

These parallels can perhaps be usefully contextualised within the overall concept of unity in plurality- the notion that different parts of the Greek world (of which Crete was very much part)<sup>221</sup> and barbarian world (such as Iolchus in Euripides’ *Medea*)<sup>222</sup> were nuanced differently as part of the idea of ‘otherness’. So, although both protagonists commit different acts of fatality, could these, in the eyes of the Athenian audience, have been seen as greater, lesser or just *different* kinds of wrong-doing committed by those living on the fringes of the Greek world - and beyond it (Crete, Iolchus)? So, just as Medea as the “‘paradigmatic, transgressive’ woman cannot fully be understood without reference to her barbarian provenance”, Phaedra’s (and Pasiphae’s) actions cannot perhaps fully be explained away without reference to their Cretan origins.<sup>223</sup> Perhaps, the means by which the poet highlights and reinforces this notion of gradations of difference in the Cretan women is, as in the

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<sup>221</sup> E.g. See Hall (1992):170, paraphrasing, that if Euripides had wanted to make Phaedra a barbarian, he would have done so.

<sup>222</sup> See e.g. *Medea* 534-5

<sup>223</sup> Hall 1991 [1989]:203 and n.9

examples above, by the use of nautical imagery and through the actions of gods such as Aphrodite/Cypris in inciting extreme forms of passion.

So, the overall idea that emerges is one where Crete and Cretan-ness, when considered in the context of all the chosen works by Euripides, comprises a good vehicle for thinking with, against and through the idea of Greekness as well as the corollary to Greekness, otherness, which includes barbarians at one extreme end of the spectrum, and many nuanced gradations of identity in between.

## **2.5 Overall Observations**

Following my analyses of the passages selected in this chapter, two main themes can be seen to emerge: first, Euripides' selective use of myth, and the variations from earlier versions of the story that the poet manipulates, and secondly, the significance of imagery noted in the passages.

### **2.5.1 The manipulation of myth and the subverting of stereotypes**

In Chapter 1 (Appendix 1), I outlined the various myths associated with Crete and the House of Minos, gleaned from early, as well as from fifth-century versions (including Euripides' workings of the stories). This chapter has, to an extent, begun to explore the theme of intertextuality between different works, specifically *Hippolytus* and *The Cretans*. This play of intertextuality is, in a more general sense, typical of Greek tragedy. As Burian argues 'Greek tragedy constitutes a grandiose

set of variations on a relatively few legendary and formal themes, forever repeating but never the same, it follows that tragedy is not casually or occasionally intertextual, but always and inherently so.’<sup>224</sup> As we have seen in this chapter, tragic praxis can be evidenced by Euripides’ manipulation of the character of Phaedra and the story, in ways that are different from their representation in his earlier version of the work. In the later *Hippolytus*, there is much ambiguity at play; for example, in not naming the harbour of the Cretan mariner at 157, which, by implication, could suggest that the reference was to the same Mounichia of Phaedra’s arrival. The use of ambiguous language was also seen at play in lines 715-721 where the reference to her ‘Cretan home’ in that context could be interpreted as a reference to Phaedra’s intention to take her own life. Such instances of ambiguity perhaps have a resonance with the Phaedra character which is wrapped up by silence and secrecy. We also saw ambiguity at work at 337-43 where Phaedra hints at the link between her questionable family history and her Cretan provenance- which she suggests was the cause of her downfall.

So, such use of ambiguity is also significant as a possible link between Phaedra’s family history, her Cretan-ness and her tragic circumstance, where she could ostensibly be seen to be a victim of her fate. However, as we have also seen, Euripides possibly thwarts and overturns this stereotype given that Phaedra could

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<sup>224</sup> Burian 1999: 179

equally be the victim of Aphrodite's making and victim of tragic causation. In this sense, the Phaedra character shares much in common with her mother, Pasiphae, in *The Cretans*, where Euripides similarly sets up then overturns the stereotype of 'bad Cretan woman'. More generally, the poet appears to manipulate the stories that first set up audience expectations, only to thwart these gradually. Euripides can be seen to be deploying previously familiar notions of women, Cretans and Cretan women, for example, in new, innovative ways that lend greater ambiguity, subtlety and depth to the women's characters, in particular Phaedra and Pasiphae.<sup>225</sup> The ambiguity in the Cretan women's natures appear also be extended to the ambiguity with which Crete, the island, is perceived, as previously discussed. As Burian also suggests '(w)here there is large-scale repetition (both of mythical accounts as well as earlier tragic works) even small innovations and minor differences will be disproportionately prominent and emphatic.'<sup>226</sup> This can certainly be seen to be the case in the examples analysed in this chapter which might appear to be minor observations of character change and actions, but they suggest more subtle, though significant aspects of how character and plot develop and can be interpreted by the audience. So, the manipulation of legendary material and changes in their emphasis and in the constituents familiar with the audience (and seen at work here), are aspects that will also be examined in the chapters to follow, in order to ascertain the

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<sup>225</sup> Aspects of this interpretation will be analysed further in the other works in the chapters to follow

<sup>226</sup> Burian 1999: 179 (my parenthesis)

degree to which intertextuality can be seen to be at play with Crete as a theme, for the chosen group of plays.

### 2.5.2 The deployment of imagery

The other notable feature that emerges from the analyses in this chapter is the use of imagery and its significance. We have noted how Cretan imagery has been deployed in Troezen in different ways, highlighting Phaedra's Cretan origins on the mainland. In the main, apart from references invoking the landscape, there have also been references to sea- and ship-related imagery alluding to Phaedra's ancestry and provenance.<sup>227</sup> Key imagery has also been deployed using the bovine theme, with references contained within the work to Pasiphae's affair with a bull, and also to the bull from the sea that kills Hippolytus. As Brock argues in the case of political metaphor, much of Euripides' use of imagery can be contextualised as being drawn from the audience's familiarity with the stories, and builds on this 'communicative capacity' of the myths.<sup>228</sup> Indeed, it could also be suggested that, taking the 'Cretan plays' as a whole, the imagery that appears to be emphasised as being 'Cretan' can also be deemed to be 'conventional', in the sense of its being familiar from, and being drawn on in other accounts (e.g. Plato's Crete), including other literary works.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> These features echoes Barlow's (2008: xii) findings on how Euripides' tangible, sensuous imagery serves to act variously as an intensifier or as contrast

<sup>228</sup> Brock 2013: xi-xx, esp. xii

<sup>229</sup> As discussed earlier in this chapter and in Chapters 3-4; also paralleling Brock's (2013: xii) discussion on the tendency for political imagery to become conventional



An interesting perspective on the nautical imagery in *Hippolytus* is the parallels and resonances also seen in another (unrelated) Euripidean work, *Medea*.<sup>230</sup> There too Medea's travels with Jason from Iolchus to Corinth and the evocation of modes of travel, the role of the sea, and ports can be found e.g. at *Medea* lines 278-9, 362-3, 523-5, 769-70 and 1121-3. In fact, Phaedra's journey from Crete to Troezen appears to be paralleled in the way Medea's journey, sailing from her father's house to a foreign land is evoked in 431 and 433.

The conventionality of such imagery cannot, however, be overstated; while it may be distinctly recognisable, what can be gleaned from this work and the other 'Cretan plays', is that each use involves an element of creativity, thereby embellishing and enhancing further the complexity and nuanced presentations of the characters and their stories. The net effect of such imagery is to re-emphasise overall elements of Cretan-ness when the plays are taken as a group, as well as within each of the works. This study will aim to build on the deployment of imagery in this work in the context of the other fragments, in the chapters to follow.

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<sup>230</sup> I have deliberately chosen a work that, by my earlier definitions at least, form a counterpoint to Euripides' Cretan stories but one which involves a protagonist who is clearly identified as 'other' – a treatment which, to a greater or lesser degree, parallels the ways in which the character of Phaedra is seen to be portrayed.

## Chapter 3: Formulations of Cretanism in Euripides' *The Cretans*

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I consider in more detail the specific references to the island of Crete and the Cretan characters in Euripides' works in order to gauge how the poet perceives, and chooses to represent, these elements. The main source of these references is contained in a fragmentary work, *The Cretans* (c. 431BC).<sup>231</sup> As the title itself suggests, the passages concern themselves with the story of the Cretan mythological characters of Minos, Pasiphae, the Minotaur, and Daedalus, with the play set on Crete. The focus of the work on the characters and location make the play an important source for this study. The poet contextualises the protagonists within the island of their provenance, including its landscape, temples, gods and spirits in particular ways, all of which combined emphasize further the notion of Cretanism.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> All references in this chapter, unless otherwise specified, are to Collard and Cropp 2008a, the Loeb series edition of Euripides' fragments of *The Cretans*, comprising approximately ten passages. The major fragments are also found in Diggle (1998) *OCT* (see also <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/tragicorum-graecorum-fragmenta-selecta-9780198146858?cc=cy&lang=en&#> [12/09/16]). See also a review by Cropp (2003) on Cozzoli's (2001) *I Cretesi*. (<http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2003/2003-09-30.html> 16/09/15)

<sup>232</sup> See Chapter 1. I use the term 'Cretanism' throughout the thesis as an adjective encompassing the various characteristics and attributes that appear to be associated with the island of Crete, and its characters from myth, and as discerned from the works of Euripides. I consider the notion of Cretanism in more detail in the concluding, Chapter 6, where I discuss it in terms of the wider features of Euripidean interest in deconstructing or complicating polarities.

The fragmentary nature of the material from *The Cretans* itself raises issues that are inherently different from those encountered, say, in Chapter 2, in the study of a complete work such as *Hippolytus*. The fragments present us with a dilemma, given their incomplete nature. Each fragment collated in Collard and Cropp's version of *The Cretans* is a dislocated piece that once belonged to a whole play, so the fragmentary text forces the reader/researcher to imagine what might have been, given that a number of different interpretations may be possible as to what the full version might have comprised.<sup>233</sup> Another related issue is the relatively small body of scholarship available on *The Cretans*.<sup>234</sup> Wherever possible, this has been utilised in an attempt to endow the fragments with meaning in seeking to build a more complete picture of the whole work, given that fragments inevitably require some kind of interpretation in order to render meaning to the whole.<sup>235</sup> For example, a fragment attributed to a speech by Minos refers to 'You Cretans' as 'children of Ida', so we might seek to extrapolate from it the notion that Euripides' Cretans were perceived as being forever associated with the iconic Cretan mountain.<sup>236</sup> These are

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<sup>233</sup> The methodological problems that these fragments present and how to address them are beyond the ambit of this thesis. Here, the excellent scholarship of Collard and Cropp 2008a, and Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995, have been relied upon to provide the contextualization, manipulation and definition in ordering and interpreting the fragments so that a fuller understanding of the work in its entirety may be attempted

<sup>234</sup> Of the detailed studies available on *The Cretans*, the main references used here include Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995, Cozzoli 2001, Bernabé 2004, and Collard and Cropp 2008a.

<sup>235</sup> Paraphrasing McHardy, Robson and Harvey 2005:1 '[b]y their very nature fragments are both tantalizing and inspirational.'

<sup>236</sup> The reference by Minos could have been to 'The Cretans' of the title or to his subjects in the play; it is hard to discern exactly if it is the population or the chorus that is being referred to here.

some of the kinds of observations that will also be tested later, in my study of works such as *Theseus* and *Cretan Women*.

Apart from considering the existing fragments, their lacunae and the effects of this also have to be taken into account. The more obvious examples of the lacunae in this work include the tentative conclusions that can be drawn about how Euripides was presenting the treatment of, for example, the Minotaur. Other inconclusive features include whether or not Daedalus' flight from Crete to Sicily was featured in this work, or indeed even referred to; also, for example, whether Theseus' imminent arrival was an element that could perhaps have heightened tensions in the work, given what we know from other mythological accounts of the Athenian's encounter with Minos and the Minotaur, and his elopement from Crete with Ariadne. So, the fragmentary nature of the evidence also offers interesting food for thought from yet another perspective: that references to Crete 'may occupy little textual space but they inhabit considerable cultural space for the audience'.<sup>237</sup> For example, the passages that refer to the nature and appearance of the Minotaur, when considered together with other references to bovine elements in the other 'Cretan plays' suggest that such animal imagery was perhaps relevant in terms of the audience's perceptions of Crete. As this chapter will discuss, some of the protagonists also appear in Euripides' other (fragmentary) works on Crete (such as *Theseus*, *Cretan Women* and

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<sup>237</sup> See Peake 2011, Ch.2 esp. p.58ff for an interesting discussion on the interplay between textual and cultural space, in the context of the references to Apollo in Aes. *Agamemnon*.

*Polyidus*) as well as in other fifth-century and earlier dramatists so as to suggest a cultural familiarity of the audience with such stories about Crete.

Over the course of this chapter and the two following ones, this study analyses and offers interpretations of the most important fragments from *The Cretans*. I begin this chapter by focusing exclusively on the first fragment, f472, which, it is argued, is key to an understanding of how Euripides represents the main Cretan protagonists of the work and their provenance. In Chapters 4 and 5, I go on to consider the other fragments, f472a to f472g, as well as f988 and f1004, all from *The Cretans*.<sup>238</sup> Through an examination of key fragments, these three chapters aim to build up a picture of the different ways in which the poet might have perceived and represented the island and its characters.

This chapter also builds on what has gone before: Chapter 1 considered the research questions in general, including how Cretans on Crete are broadly represented in Euripides' works – a theme that is elaborated on in this chapter. And while Chapter 2 considered, in *Hippolytus*, the case of Phaedra-the-Cretan from a perspective of the mainland looking out to the island, this chapter considers Phaedra's provenance and parentage as set within the island. In Chapter 2 certain elements were identified that will continue to be relevant in this chapter, including the particular tensions and

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<sup>238</sup> Although there is *some* speculation about f988 and f1004, thought 'almost certainly' to be from *The Cretans* (see Collard and Cropp 2008a: 555).

contradictions that surfaced in the analysis of the more explicit references to Cretanism. These were identified in the following contexts: the construct of *Cretan* identity by the Chorus of Women of Troezen and Phaedra's *self identification* of her Cretan origins; the evocation of Cretan gods and spirits in Troezen which served to emphasize Phaedra's provenance. Together with the invocation of graphic nautical imagery of ships, mariners, sailing and anchoring and the rope with which Phaedra hangs herself, the sea also reinforces more popular fifth-century Athenian notions of Crete in terms of its myth-historical fame as a sea-faring nation. Finally, the acts of concealment of secrets and their subsequent revelation were shown to form an important part of the characterization of the protagonists.

Given the 'fragmentary' nature of the storyline itself, I have relied on three main sources, often themselves relying on earlier reconstructions of the possible plot of the play in full: Webster, Cozzoli, and Collard and Cropp.<sup>239</sup> So, in this section, I consider the different versions offered by my three scholars of choice, while noting that they are all, in the main, in broad agreement with the play's storyline.

The opening of the play seems to be centred on Minos' summoning of the Cretan Elders of the title to consult with them after learning that Pasiphae has secretly given birth to the Minotaur. The Elders counsel Minos to act with caution; Minos

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<sup>239</sup> Webster 1967: 90-91; (see also Rosenquist 1978:38); Cozzoli 2001: 9-18; Collard and Cropp 2008a: 531-2.

however, dismisses them and summons Pasiphae whom he cross-examines before sentencing her to death for her deed. Minos and the Nurse discuss the nature and the description of the Minotaur in some detail. The fragments end abruptly with a reference by Minos to Daedalus and possibly to his part in the plot to build the artificial cow that Pasiphae deploys to mate with Minos' prize bull. This action appears to presuppose the following events: first, there was a contest for the kingship of Crete, with Minos claiming that he was its rightful heir and asserting that the kingship was the gods' gift to him. This led to Minos asking the sea-god, Poseidon, for his help, and for a confirmatory sign. The god agreed and said that, as proof of his approval, he would send the finest bull ever seen to Minos' herd. Poseidon decreed that the bull be sacrificed to him. Minos agreed at first, but when he set eyes on the bull, he was overcome by its beauty and so decided to keep the bull for himself and sacrificed another in its place.<sup>240</sup> His trick incurred the wrath of the god who afflicted his wife, Pasiphae, with a terrible curse that made her fall in love with the bull and wish to mate with it. The master-builder and craftsman, Daedalus, built a decoy cow that Pasiphae hid within. The bull then mated with this cow. The Minotaur (which had the head of a bull on a human body) was born as a result of that union.

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<sup>240</sup> Cozzoli 2001:11. The different versions agree on the idea that Poseidon's bull was very attractive. It is interesting to speculate on the possibility that Minos himself was attracted to the bull's physical beauty. It could be speculated further that, given Minos' family history and a propensity for intimate relationships with the bovine, this could be an inherited trait. This is perhaps alluded to by Pasiphae in *The Cretans* f472e.20-3 in her counter accusation (*it was this man's destiny*).

The major fragments are listed below in the order in which they are generally thought by scholars (such as Webster, Cozzoli, and Collard and Cropp) to have occurred in the play. I also give an indication of the content and the likely context of these fragments of *The Cretans*:<sup>241</sup>

- (a) A Chorus of Mystics, the 'Cretans' of the title, is summoned to Minos' palace to counsel the Cretan king upon his discovery of the birth of the Minotaur (f472) to his queen, Pasiphae. They appeal to Apollo for help (f472b).
- (b) In the presence of the Chorus, Pasiphae's nurse is summoned; Minos interrogates her and she explains how Daedalus helped Pasiphae's union with the bull (f472a-b). The Chorus react with lyric alarm. Minos summons Pasiphae and accuses her; the queen defends herself by blaming Minos' offence against Poseidon for all the misery. The Chorus fails to prevent Minos from sentencing his queen to death by underground imprisonment, and she is incarcerated, along with the Nurse. From f472e, it is possible to deduce that the queen is imprisoned along with two slaves and that they all perish.<sup>242</sup>
- (d) Minos instructs Daedalus to construct the Labyrinth, in which he imprisons and conceals the Minotaur. Minos then arrests Daedalus and Icarus and imprisons

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<sup>241</sup> The fragment numbering follows Collard and Cropp 2008a: 538-539. For a detailed description of the structure of the play, see Cozzoli 2001: 11-13.

<sup>242</sup> Although another possibility exists: see Collard and Cropp 1995: 54-5 which suggests 'Pasiphae's miraculous release by a god', either Athena or Poseidon is suggested.



them both. F988 is commonly believed to be part of a dialogue between Minos and Daedalus.<sup>243</sup>

(e) A messenger speech follows describing the escape of Daedalus and Icarus (to Sicily); Icarus delivers a monody before his fatal flight (f472g); and finally,

(f) Minos begins to search for the father and son but a god intercedes on Pasiphae's behalf and explains that Daedalus and Icarus have fled Crete.<sup>244</sup>

As stated previously, this chapter undertakes a close reading of only the first passage, f472 (while Chapters 4 and 5 consider the other fragments of the play). In the current chapter, I consider how Minos and his parents, Zeus and Europa, are referred to and represented within the play. Then, I consider in greater detail how the stories of Zeus and Europa were depicted both in Euripides' other works as well as in contemporary, fifth-century and earlier dramatic works. Next, I consider how Minos is represented in this play, comparing his depiction here to those found in earlier literary works including epic. I then move on to consider the nature of descriptions of the temple of Zeus, where the action of the play appears to begin. I consider the implications of the detailed description of the temple building in the context of the Cretan cult of Zeus, as well as the relationship of Minos to his father, the god Zeus. Next, I consider the references in the passage to specific iconic, Cretan

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<sup>243</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a:555

<sup>244</sup> Although the evidence for this reconstruction is, at best, sketchy. See Collard and Cropp 2008a:531. It should also be noted that elements of (a) to (f) rely on late summaries (esp. Apollodorus 3.1.4; Hyginus *Fabulae* 40.3-4)

imagery (such as Mount Ida, the Mountain Mother and Cretan spirits, as well as the god Zeus) all of which occur in this work as well as in *Hippolytus* (see Chapter 2); I then discuss the possible implications of their deployment in the context of Cretanism. Finally, I consider some conclusions that emerge from my explorations of these representations of Crete and Cretans by Euripides.

### The parados: lines 1-19

I begin by analyzing the parados from lines 1-19.<sup>245</sup>

#### ΧΟΡΟΣ

Φοινικογενοῦς τέκνον Εὐρώπης  
καὶ τοῦ μεγάλου Ζηνός, ἀνάσσω  
Κρήτης ἑκατοπτολιέθρου  
ἦκω ζαθέους ναοὺς προλιπών,  
οὐς αὐθιγενῆς στεγανοὺς παρέχει 5  
τμηθεῖσα δοκοὺς Χαλύβω πελέκει  
καὶ ταυροδέτῳ κόλλη κραθεῖς'  
ἀτρεκεῖς ἄρμους κυπάρισσος.  
ἀγνὸν δὲ βίον τείνομεν ἐξ οὗ  
Διὸς Ἰδαίου μύστης γενόμην 10  
καὶ νυκτιπόλου Ζεγρέως Βούτης  
τὰς ὠμοφάγους δαῖτας τελέσας,  
Μητρί τ' ὀρεῖα δᾶδας ἀνασχών  
μετὰ Κουρήτων  
Βάκχος ἐκλήθην ὀσιωθεῖς. 15  
πάλλευκα δ' ἔχων εἴματα φεύγω  
γένεσίν τε Βροτῶν καὶ νεκροθήκας  
οὐ χριμπτόμενος, τήν τ' ἐμψύχων  
βρῶσιν ἐδεστῶν πεφύλαγμαι.

<sup>245</sup> It is unclear from surviving evidence whether this constitutes the opening of the play or simply the first lines as have. It would be unique, perhaps, to begin a work with a chorus – we are left to guess the identity of the speaker seen on stage before the chorus; if there was such a speaker, given the contents of the parados, it is most likely to be Minos.

Chorus:

Son of Phoenician-born Europa and of great Zeus – you who rule Crete and its hundred cities! I have come here from the most holy temple whose roof is provided from native cypress-wood cut into beams with Chalybean axe and bonded in exact joints with ox-glue. Pure is the life I have led since I became an initiate of Idaean Zeus and a servitor of night-ranging Zagreus, performing his feasts of raw flesh; and raising torches high to the Mountain Mother among the Curetes, I was consecrated and named a celebrant. In clothing all of white I shun the birthing of men, and the places of their dead, I do not go near; against the eating of animal foods I have guarded myself.<sup>246</sup>

The play opens with the discovery that Poseidon's curse on Minos has taken effect:

Pasiphae, afflicted by the curse, has given birth to a monster, the Minotaur. Minos, realising the terrible effects that the god's curse will have on him and his court, summons the Chorus, plausibly the Cretan priests or elders of the title. The opening lines of the parados f472.1-3 begin with the Chorus singing in praise of their ruler; they pay high accolades to their king, allude to his pedigree, and to his status as ruler of Crete.<sup>247</sup>

Son of Phoenician-born Europa and of great Zeus – you who rule Crete and its hundred cities!

In these lines, Minos, ruler of Crete, is invoked by reference to his parents in epithetical terms as son of Europa-the-Phoenician and the great Zeus. In evoking

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<sup>246</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all translations of the fragment, *The Cretans*, are from Collard and Cropp: 2008a: 534 – 555.

<sup>247</sup> For discussions in support of the view that the title, *The Cretans*, refers to the Chorus of Elders, and not to Minos and Pasiphae see Page 1942: 73; Guthrie 1993: 111, also Cozzoli 2001:11. I concur with this interpretation.

Europa with the epithet, Φοινικογενοῦς τέκνον Εὐρώπης, Euripides appears to be following versions found in earlier epic in making Europa's father Phoenix and not Agenor.<sup>248</sup> Lines 1-2 recall the myths of Europa and Zeus in which Zeus abducts the princess from Phoenicia. In one version, Zeus rides on a bull; in another, the god is metamorphosed into the animal. In both versions, Zeus brings Europa to Crete, where Minos is born from that union between god and mortal. It is significant that in *The Cretans* Minos is presented as the (semi-divine) son of Zeus and Europa, given similar accounts elsewhere. Various original sources refer to this aspect of the myths where Europa gives birth to three semi-divine sons by Zeus, an account which can be seen as marking an important point in the creation of one of the key myths of Crete: in these opening lines, the poet establishes Crete's history at the outset. The reference to Zeus and Europa (the 'founders' of the House of Minos) serves to establish and enhance Minos' own pedigree, given Zeus' significant position as the chief god of the Olympic *Dodekatheon*. Minos and his two brothers, Rhadamanthys and Sarpedon, all earn their places in the halls of fame of both Crete, and all Greece.<sup>249</sup>

Also intimated in this passage is the journey undertaken by Minos' parents from Phoenicia, over the seas, to the Crete of the play. In Chapter 2 on *Hippolytus*, I

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<sup>248</sup> Homer (*Iliad* 14.321), Hesiodic fragments 89, 90.7, and Bacchylides (*Ode* 17, *Dithyramb* 3, F10 (12). See fuller discussion in Chapter 4. Other versions offer Agenor, king of Tyre as Europa's father (e.g. Apollodorus, *Library and Epitome*, 3.1.1.299, trans. Frazer 1921).

<sup>249</sup> See e.g. *Il.* 13.450-54; 14.321-2, *Od.* 19.178, Thuc. 1.4, Hdt. 1.173 (Minos); *Il.* 14.322 (Rhadamanthys); *Il.* 5.629-662, Hdt. 1.173 (Sarpedon).

discussed Phaedra's journey from Crete to Troezen, from island to mainland. In Euripides' version of the Europa myth here in *The Cretans*, another journey, this time from Phoenicia to Crete, from mainland to island, is recalled. This notion of sea-crossings to and from the island to the Greek mainland can be seen as a recurring theme in Euripides' representation of Cretans, and one key element in the construct of insularity. This idea will be elaborated upon later in Chapter 5. In the following section, I consider how the Zeus-Europa story was depicted in literature generally.

## **3.2 Zeus and Europa in *The Cretans***

### **3.2.1 Versions of the Zeus-Europa myths occurring in earlier sources**

Early versions of the Cretan myths refer to Zeus and Minos and also tell of Europa and her sea-crossing to Crete. The opening lines 1-2 of f472 appear to relate to these earlier versions of the myths in three particular aspects: Zeus' key role in the myths, Europa's Phoenician origins, and the birth of their son, Minos. The evidence from these earlier sources is briefly considered here. In following earlier tradition, Euripides was perhaps drawing on the spectator's familiarity and knowledge of the myths in positioning the play in a Crete known to his audience from stories found in literature from epic onwards. Having considered these earlier sources in brief, I will show, in the course of the chapter, how the poet then proceeds to problematize the more familiar accounts of the mythical king when he turns the spotlight on Minos in *The Cretans*.

### 3.2.2 Europa and Zeus in epic

The first (and only) reference to Europa in Homer is found in *Iliad* 14.321-2:

... Φοίνικος κούρης τηλεκλειτοῖο,  
ἧ τέκε μοι Μίνων τε καὶ ἀντίθεον Ῥαδάμανθυν

... the daughter of far-famed Phoinix,  
that bare me Minos and god-like Rhadamanthys.<sup>250</sup>

In the Homeric version, Europa was one of Zeus' lovers and the daughter of Phoenix; her father, Phoenix (effectively, Minos' grandfather) is accorded the epithet 'far-famed' king of Phoenicia. According to the *Iliad*, then, Europa had two children by Zeus, including Minos whose status is established as the son of Zeus and Europa.<sup>251</sup>

There are at least two fragments relating to Hesiodic texts that refer to Europa's story: the first, f89 (= f10 Maehler), is a scholion on Book 3 of the *Catalogue of Women*:

Εὐρώπην τὴν Φοίνικος  
γενομένη δὲ ἔγκυος ...  
ἐκείνη τρεῖς παῖδας ἐγεννησε Μίνωα Σαρπηδόνα Ῥαδάμανθυν.  
ἡ ἱστορία παρ' Ἡσιόδῳ καὶ Βακχυλίδῃ

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<sup>250</sup> Trans. Murray 1955: 90-91 (who uses 'bare' and not 'bore').

<sup>251</sup> The context of this passage from the *Iliad* suggests that of the seven women whom Zeus made love to, five produced offspring who became heroes in their own right, with Europa being the only one in the group who produced *two* such personalities, both of whom are named, and one, credited with the epithet 'god-like'. Europa can therefore herself be credited as being an important personage amongst Zeus' women in Homer.

Zeus saw Phoenix's daughter ...  
She became pregnant and bore three children, Minos, Sarpedon, and  
Rhadamanthys. The story is in Hesiod and Bacchylides.<sup>252</sup>

Also in the Hesiodic *Catalogue* f90, we find:

κού]ρ[η]ι Φοίνικος ἀγαυοῦ.

to the daughter of illustrious  
Phoenix.<sup>253</sup>

And in again, later in the same f90:

Μίνω τε κρείοντα] δίκαιόν τε Ῥαδάμανθυν  
καὶ Σαρτηδόνα δῖον] ἀμύμονά τε κρατερ[όν τε

sovereign Minos] and just Rhadamanthys  
and godly Sarpedon,] excellent and strong.<sup>254</sup>

As in Euripides, these versions also reiterate Europa's Phoenician origins, with  
Phoenix as her father. Euripides' version of *The Cretans* appears to follow these  
earlier Hesiodic versions in terms of Europa's association with Zeus and Minos'  
status as their son.

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<sup>252</sup> Trans. Most 2007: 158-9 (f. 89 [140 MW] Schol. D Hom. *Il.* 12.397 (p. 392 van Thiel); cf. Schol. T Hom. *Il.* 12.292 (III p. 359.49 Erbse cum apparatu).

<sup>253</sup> Trans. Most 2007: 160-1 (f. 90 [141 MW; 56 H] P.Oxy. 1358 fr. 1 col. I; 6-13; P. Reinach 77.

<sup>254</sup> Trans. Most 2007: 160-3(f90 [141 MW; 56 H].

### 3.2.3 Europa and Zeus in earlier literature

In Bacchylides' Ode 17, Dithyramb 3 (*Youths*, or *Theseus*) Theseus refers to Minos' high status as the offspring of Europa and Zeus; he also accords the Cretan son of Zeus the epithet 'peerless among mortals'. Theseus addresses Minos in this Ode:

εἰ καί σε κεδνὰ  
τέκεν λέχει Διὸς ὑπὸ κρόταφον Ἰδᾶς  
μιγεῖσα Φοῖνικος ἔρα-  
τώνυμος κόρα βροτῶν  
φέρτατον, ....

What if the noble daughter of Phoenix, maiden with love in her name,  
bore you, peerless among mortals, after union with Zeus under the  
brow of Mount Ida? [17.29-33]<sup>255</sup>

And Minos, replying to Theseus, repeats the references to both his parents:

“μεγαλοσθενές  
Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἄκουσον· εἴ περ με νύμφα  
Φοίνισσα λευκώλενος σοὶ τέκεν, ...”

‘Mighty father Zeus, hear me: if the white-armed Phoenician maiden  
indeed bore me as your son, ...[17.52-54]<sup>256</sup>

In both passages above, Minos' status as Zeus' own son is emphasized, with Europa as his mother. In addition, line 30 of the first passage also makes reference to a

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<sup>255</sup> Trans. Campbell 1992: 218-9; Jebb 1905: 377 n. 31f provides a link between Crete and Phoenicia from this dithyramb - ‘The legend points to the blending of Phoenician with Hellenic elements in Crete.’

<sup>256</sup> Trans. Campbell 1992: 220-1



Cretan icon found in *The Cretans* f472.10: 'Mount Ida', which has strong associations both with Zeus, Europa and Crete (and is discussed later).

Another fragment from Bacchylides', *Victory-Odes* 1.122-4, *For Argeus of Ceos, Boy Boxer, Isthmian Games*, similarly refers to Minos, king of Crete and son of Europa:

Κνωσὸν ἱμερτὰν [πό]λιν  
β[ασιλεὺς Εὐρωπιά[δας ]·

away to the lovely city of Cnossus, that king,  
Europa's son.<sup>257</sup>

Taking these early literary sources together, we can note that the versions first found in Homer and Hesiod are drawn on and elaborated upon by Bacchylides. The latter version serves to underline the familiarity of the stories of Zeus, Europa and Minos from earlier myths. In fact, the opening lines from Euripides' *The Cretans* appear to recall these earlier versions. So, from these very opening lines of the parados in *The Cretans*, it is plausible to assume that the audience, by drawing on such previous knowledge and familiarity of the stories, would gauge the full impact of the references to Minos in terms of his status: his parentage makes him semi-divine. He is also the powerful ruler of a mighty Crete.

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<sup>257</sup> Trans. Campbell 1992:120-121

A similar reference is also found in a fifth-century version of a work by Aeschylus in f99-100, *Cares* (or *Carians*), or *Europa*, where Europa tells her story as Minos' mother:

ταύρω τε λειμῶ ξένια πάμβοτον †παρὰν†.  
τοιόνδε μὲν Ζεὺς κλέμμα πρεσβύτου πατρός  
αὐτοῦ μένων ἄμοχθος ἤνυσεν λαβεῖν.

[My father unwittingly facilitated my abduction by welcoming Zeus' treacherous agent(?)] and <providing (?)><sup>258</sup> for the bull a rich grazing meadow as a guest-gift. Such was the theft that Zeus succeeded in committing at the expense of my aged father, without moving from his place and without any toil.

ἐκ τῶν μεγίστων δ' ἠρξάμην φυτευμάτων  
Μίνων τεκούσα ...

I began with the greatest of my offspring, giving birth to  
Minos ....<sup>259</sup>

In this fragment what appears to be emphasized is Zeus' abduction of Europa from Phoenicia to Crete story as well as Europa's own role as Minos' mother. Both these elements also occur in the Euripidean version of *The Cretans*.

In summary, then, earlier versions of the myth (including one from the fifth century) all stress aspects of Zeus' conveying of Europa to Crete as well as the prominent roles of Zeus and Europa as Minos' parents.

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<sup>258</sup> See Sommerstein 2008a: 113 for the problems arising on this passage due to lost lines: 'Here at least a line and a half, probably more, are lost: Europa may well have said something about Minos' wealth and his rule over Crete and beyond, and will certainly have mentioned that he is now dead.'

<sup>259</sup> Trans. Sommerstein 2008a: 112-117; the suggested date for *Cares* is c. 460BC (Keen 2005: 65).

### 3.2.4 Europa and Zeus elsewhere in Euripides

References to Zeus and Europa in the contexts of their roles as Minos' parents also occur in other fragments by Euripides, as well as in hypotheses, as seen in the following examples.

First, in *Hypsipyle* (f752g):<sup>260</sup>

Ποίνικος Τυρία παῖς  
Εὐρώπα λιποῦσ' ἐπέβα  
Διοτρόφον Κρήταν ἱερὰν  
Κουρήτων τροφὸν ἀνδρῶν,  
ἃ τέκνων ἀρότοις[ι]ν  
τρισοῖς ἔλιπεν κρά[τος  
χώρας τ' ὄλβιον ἀρχάν.

Phoenix's daughter from Tyre, Europa, left city and father's home<sup>261</sup>  
and went on the waves to sacred Crete, nurse of Zeus and  
the Curetes; to her threefold harvest of children she left  
power and prosperous government of the land.

In this fragment, Europa is again presented as Phoenix's daughter; she is brought to Crete by Zeus and has three sons by the god. Given that *Hypsipyle* was produced at least a good twenty years after *The Cretans*, it is interesting to note that, even in the later work, Euripides invokes the same story line of Europa's crossing to Crete and the birth of her three sons, including Minos; it would appear that the poet is

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<sup>260</sup> Collard and Cropp 2008b: 271

<sup>261</sup> With P. Oxy.'s reading, "how once the Tyrian girl Europa left city and father's home in Phoenicia..." Zeus took the form of a bull to carry Europa across the sea from Tyre to Crete; their sons were Minos, Rhadamanthys and Sarpedon, cf. *Phrixus* f820.

exploring the same idea in different ways in each work.<sup>262</sup> Also in this passage we find a reference to the Curetes, male devotees of Zeus who are referred to also in *The Cretans* f472. 13-15.<sup>263</sup>

Another fragment, f820, a hypothesis on Euripides' *Phrixus B* in two parts, refers directly to the Europa myths in terms of Europa's journey from Phoenicia to Crete. Here, we find a reference to Taurus, possibly Zeus metamorphosed, or his agent, the bull, who transported Europa to the island:<sup>264</sup>

(a) (Ταῦρος) ...οὗτος λέγεται ἐν τοῖς ἄστροις τεθῆναι διὰ τὸ Εὐρώπην ἀγαγεῖν ἀπὸ Φοινίκης εἰς Κρήτην ἀσφαλῶς διὰ τοῦ πελάγους, ὡς Εὐριπίδης φησὶν ἐν τῷ Φρίξῳ.

(Taurus) ...he is said to have been placed among the stars because he brought Europa from Phoenicia to Crete safely over the ocean, as Euripides says in *Phrixus*.<sup>265</sup>

(b) (Εὐρώπη) ... ἐξ ἧς ἔσχεν υἱὸν τὸν Μίνω, καθὼς καὶ Εὐριπίδης ὁ σοφώτατος ποιητικῶς συνεγράψατο, ὅς φησιν ὅτι Ζεὺς μεταβληθεὶς εἰς ταῦρον τὴν Εὐρώπην ἤρπασεν.

(Europa) ... from whom (Zeus) got his son Minos, as the very learned Euripides has recorded poetically; he says that Zeus was transformed into a bull and carried off Europa.<sup>266</sup>

<sup>262</sup> See Appendix 2 of Chapter 1 (*The Cretans* 431BC; *Hypsipyle* 411-407BC).

<sup>263</sup> The *Curetes* were young male devotees of Zeus cf. *The Cretans* f472. 13-15 with note 5 (see later; Cropp and Collard 2008a: 539); see also Haft 1981: 220 n.53 – it is noticeable that all references to the *Curetes* occur in conjunction with some description of Zeus.

<sup>264</sup> *Phrixus* attributed to middle-late 420s (Collard and Crop 2008b: 427) Test iib attributed to Hyginus, *Fab* 2 and 3; see Collard and Crop 2008b: 441.

<sup>265</sup> Collard and Crop 2008b: 440 – 1; n. 1: references to 'Europa's passage to Crete also at *Hypsipyle* f752. 18-23, cf. *Cretans* f472.1-2 (in both places without the mention of the bull-Zeus who abducted her).'

<sup>266</sup> Collard and Crop 2008b: 440 - 1

The features that are emphasized in both these passages are Europa's Phoenician origins, Zeus' role in transporting her to Crete, and the birth of Minos, their son, on Crete.

As we have seen, the version adopted by Euripides in portraying Minos in the opening lines of *The Cretans* appears to be an allusion to his depictions in *Hypsipyle* and *Phrixus B*. It also appears to be in accordance with the versions considered earlier by Aeschylus, Bacchylides, Hesiod and Homer. These various versions also seem to share similarities in the way that Zeus and Europa are represented.<sup>267</sup>

I suggest here that a detailed consideration of these other representations (some earlier than Euripides) is fundamental to gaining a deeper understanding of the work, and the way Euripides has chosen to represent the Cretans in it. Although the references to Europa and Zeus are confined to one line in *The Cretans*, they are nevertheless highly significant considering their contexts in relation to earlier sources as well as Euripides' other works. Here, we see an example of how the references to Crete occupy little textual space but they nevertheless inhabit considerable cultural space for the audience due to the various references elsewhere to the same story. In addition, by recalling Minos' provenance in the opening lines

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<sup>267</sup> As we have also seen, Euripides' own later works (e.g. *Phrixus B*) also refer back to these stories again.

of *The Cretans*, Euripides not only appears to be drawing on these earlier versions, but also invokes the dense web of interconnections in which each of the ‘Cretan plays’ carries memories of another, and is complicated, enriched and even defined by its relationship with other texts.<sup>268</sup> As we shall see in the chapters to follow, allusions from previous works are subsequently challenged, problematized and restated, as part of Euripides’ construct of Cretanism.

### 3.2.5 The Cretan Zeus in *The Cretans*

The epithetical reference to Zeus in line 2 of fragment f472 of *The Cretans* is significant. The poet accords the god the epithet τοῦ μεγάλου Ζηνός (‘the great Zeus’) as if to acknowledge the importance of Zeus and his cult on the island (cultic rites are described later in lines 9-19). Zeus is traditionally believed to have had strong connections with the island – his birth, life, and by some accounts, death on Crete is particularly relevant in this context.<sup>269</sup> Euripides’ recalling of such stories at the very beginning of the play perhaps establishes the kind of Crete the poet wishes to construct and represent, with the god much in evidence. The descriptions of rites in the passage suggest a kind of exoticism, perhaps alluding to fifth-century perceptions of the practice of an archaic religion on the island. Ancient sources refer to the rituals surrounding Zeus’ birth, as well as to a Crete where the Greek world’s

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<sup>268</sup> Paraphrasing Armstrong 2006: 22-3.

<sup>269</sup> See e.g. Bacc. Ode 17.33, Dithyramb 3 (*Youths*, or *Theseus*), where Zeus and Europa reside in Crete; they lie ‘under the brow of Mount Ida’ after their lovemaking.

most ancient laws were propounded, which Minos was said to have received directly from the god, his father.<sup>270</sup>

### 3.3 Minos as ruler of Crete

The idea of Zeus' greatness as seen in line 2 appears linked to Minos himself as the ruler of 'Crete and its hundred cities' in lines 2-3.<sup>271</sup> Homeric epic refers variously to two separate notions of Crete – first, as being the island with either ninety or a hundred cities;<sup>272</sup> secondly, Minos' fame as ruler of Crete.<sup>273</sup> The notion of Crete with Minos as the ruler of its hundred cities is likely to be a fifth-century development and is reflected in Euripides' version. Euripides' description in lines 2-3 appears as a synthesis of those earlier descriptions from epic; the poet's reference to Minos as king of a hundred-cited Crete is also echoed by his contemporary, Pindar.<sup>274</sup> It is plausible that this fifth-century Pindaric version became the most influential myth-historical account from then on, given that later versions by Latin poets also reflect this development.<sup>275</sup> I suggest that it is significant that Euripides

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<sup>270</sup> E.g. Plato *Minos* 318c-d, 321b: Crete as 'the source of the most ancient and best laws'.

<sup>271</sup> See Haft 1981: 220 n.53.

<sup>272</sup> *Od.* 19.174: 'ninety cities'; *Il.* 2.649: 'a hundred-cited Crete'. So, in the *Odyssey*, Minos rules over ninety cities including Knossus, and in the *Iliad* he rules over a hundred cities. Also, references to Knossos generally function as a general epithet for Crete and 'Cretan'.

<sup>273</sup> *Od.* 19.178.

<sup>274</sup> Pindar c. 522-443 (or 518-438) i.e. slightly predating Euripides (c. 480-406); Pindar *Paean IV.* 34-5; The Cretans promise Euxantios a seventh share of the hundred cities of Crete with the sons of Pasiphae: ἐκάς ἐόντων λόγο[ν ἄν]ακτος Εὐξαντίου ἐπαίνεσα [Κρητ]ῶν ματιομένων ὅς ἀνα[ίνετο αὐταρχεῖν, πολίων δ' ἑκατὸν πεδέχει[ν μέρος ἑβδομον Πασιφ[ά]ας <σὺν> υἱοῖ[σι]; see also Race 1997: 254-7, Rosenquist 1978: 15.

<sup>275</sup> See Armstrong 2006:116 on Ovid, *Heroides* 10.67-70, as an example of a later work reflecting the version of Minos as ruler of a hundred cities of Crete (although a striking exception is found in Plato *Minos* 319b: Socrates refers to Minos as king of ninety-cited Crete).

refers to Minos not just as ruler of Crete but ruler of the hundred cities of the island - a number that surely suggests the power and might of its king. The idea of a powerful Crete is alluded to in fifth-century historiographical records too; although no reference is found to Euripides' hundred-citied Crete, its naval power is attested in Thucydides 1.4.1:

Μίνως γὰρ παλαίτατος ὢν ἀκοῇ ἴσμεν ναυτικὸν ἐκτίσας

Minos, according to tradition, was the first person to organize a navy.<sup>276</sup>

As also suggested in Thucydides, Euripides' version of the Cretans appears to be in line with the versions from epic, literature and history portraying Minos as supreme ruler of a powerful, civilized Crete. However, as we shall see in the *agon* in f472e, there is a development of Minos' character where Euripides will problematize the portrayal of the Cretan king to create a fuller, more multi-layered figure than anything found in contemporary (or indeed, earlier) literature.

In summary, the points noted so far from *The Cretans* lines 1-3 are that the poet establishes Crete's history, with Zeus and Europa as the 'founders' of the House of Minos and that the opening lines also serve to establish and enhance Minos' own pedigree. Different perspectives on Minos' character (his parentage, power, status etc.) are alluded to from the way Euripides has chosen to present the opening lines: Minos is seen as king of a powerful Crete and his complex character is slowly revealed as the play unfolds.

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<sup>276</sup> Trans. Warner 1972: 37



### 3.4 Temple descriptions in the parados

The opening lines of the parados posit the action of the play within the palace of Minos where the king is presiding over the Elders who have just come from Zeus' temple. So far, I have considered the main elements deployed by the dramatist in beginning to establish both the characters and a sense of place on Crete. A striking feature of the parados is that we become aware of a sense of theatrical space and the location of the play on the island, almost from its opening lines. The Chorus, Cretan elders or priests, address their king in his palace while recalling his illustrious Cretan pedigree, and immediately the Athenian audience is asked to re-imagine the theatrical space before them as that of a palace – situated on the island.<sup>277</sup> In this section, I consider the devices used to enhance that theatrical space which further emphasize the play's location further on the island; here, I analyze the detailed description in the parados of the architecture of the temple where the Cretans of the title, priests (or elders), have just performed their religious rites.

The descriptions of the temple of Zeus are strikingly detailed in lines 4-7. The priests of the title announce to king Minos that they have come to his palace after worshipping at the 'most holy' temple of the Cretan Zeus (cf. 'Idaeon Zeus' later in line 10). The passage details two aspects of the temple, in particular – its status and

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<sup>277</sup> Cf. the prologue by Dionysus in *The Bacchae* 1-64 where Thebes is recreated from the first line onwards.

its architecture. First, the temple is described as ‘most holy’, ζαθέους; this invocation of the temple of Zeus in part echoes the epithet τοῦ μεγάλου Ζηνός in line 3, the most holy temple of the great Zeus. The reference to the temple not only suggests its importance *per se* both to the Chorus and to Minos (who has summoned them), but also alludes to the status of the priests who perform worship there, and the sacred nature of their rites themselves which are later described in detail in 9-19. So, this temple appears to be portrayed as a centre of some importance to the Cretan Zeus cult. Such a portrayal could be seen to highlight prevailing fifth-century views of the birth of Zeus on Mount Ida,<sup>278</sup> as well as to the god’s life and, in some accounts, death on the island.<sup>279</sup> (The significance of Mount Ida as part of Cretanism is considered in more detail later.)

In terms of the temple architecture described, the notable features are: the type of wood used, that is, native cypress-wood; the temple’s construction using precisely-cut beams; the kind of steel used for the axes for cutting the beams; and the use of ox-glue as a bonding agent. I propose that these distinctive, physical, even ‘recognizable’ elements are included here as a literary device intended to ground the play in a lived experience evoking a Cretan temple of a type that a fifth-century Athenian audience might envision. As Bacon suggests in the context of Euripides’ ‘foreign temples’ described in, for example, *Iphegenia Among the Taurians* and *Ion*, the

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<sup>278</sup> Or, by other accounts, on Mount Dicte; (e.g. see Cook 1940: 149-50).

<sup>279</sup> See Armstrong 2006: 1-2 (and n. 2), 13 for accounts of Zeus’ birth *and* death on Crete.

Greek audience is often reminded of its own native architecture through the dramatist's evocation of these non-Greek temples.<sup>280</sup> I suggest here that the dramatist contextualizes Cretan religious practices in this play by using terminology and descriptions familiar to a fifth-century Athenian audience. In order to demonstrate this notion more fully, each of these architectural features described is analyzed in more detail. Where relevant, attention is drawn to corresponding references of these features as cited in other extant sources; for example, the references to cypress-wood on Crete (as in line 5) are also found in Plato *Laws* 625c. The idea here is not necessarily to verify fact or verisimilitude, but more to corroborate evidence of the spectator's prevailing knowledge and their familiarity of notions or concepts displayed in Euripides by considering other early or contemporary literary sources.<sup>281</sup>

In considering the various elements used in the description of the temple roof, I first consider the reference to 'native cypress-wood' (also translated as 'cypress wood grown on the very site') οὗς αὐθιγενῆς στεγανούς παρέχει ... κυπάρισσος (5-8).<sup>282</sup> A fruitful point of comparison here is Plato's *Laws* 625c where we find Clinias discussing Cretan cypress trees found on the road to Knossos:

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<sup>280</sup> Bacon 1961: 136

<sup>281</sup> In addition to considering the perspective of Athenian audiences, it is worth noting Easterling's (1994:74) suggestion that there is a likelihood that the plays were actually performed in the locales named in the works. If this was the case, then Euripides' descriptions of the temple could also have been familiar to his Cretan spectators.

<sup>282</sup> Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995: 59; See Cozzoli 2001: 82 on αὐθιγενῆς in line 5, and on the tree as being native to Crete.

καὶ μὴν ἔστιν γε, ὦ ξένε, προϊόντι κυπαρίττων τε ἐν τοῖς ἄλσεσιν ὕψη  
καὶ κάλλη θαυμάσια, καὶ λειμῶνες ἐν οἷσιν ἀναπαυόμενοι  
διατρίβοιμεν ἄν.

True, Stranger; and as one proceeds further one finds in the groves  
cypress-trees of wonderful height and beauty, and meadows too, where  
we may rest ourselves and talk.<sup>283</sup>

In this passage, the cypress trees are said to occur naturally on Crete. Here, both  
Clinias and ‘the stranger’, visitors to the island, are struck by the nature of these  
trees.<sup>284</sup>

Based on the κυπάρισσος of line 8, Bernabé goes on to propose that not only was the  
cypress a tree that was very characteristic of Crete but also that it was found  
especially on Mount Ida.<sup>285</sup> Other evidence suggests that the cypress was regarded  
as a common timber and that Crete was famous for it,<sup>286</sup> it is noteworthy also that  
Euripides makes another reference to it in *Hypsipyle* f758b.10 (κυπαρισσόροφον,  
cypress-roofed) in a similar, ritualistic context.<sup>287</sup> Pindar too associates the cypress

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<sup>283</sup> Burnet (trans.) 1903.

<sup>284</sup> However, see Rackham and Moody 1996: 130 for a contrary view on cypress trees in Crete (noting that all I am claiming here is that there was a perception that the cypress occurred on Crete in the classical age). However, see also Rackham and Moody 1996: 129 ‘From the fifth century BC onwards cypress was a symbol of Crete’; and n. 18 cf. Hermippos the Comic, *Phormophoroi*, I. 14 (‘from glorious Crete, cypress for the gods’ (trans. Jones, 2008: 181-2), Pindar, *Paean*, 4.31-4; For accounts of cypress trees on Crete, see Sekunda 2000: 344-5 cf. Theophrastus *Hist. Plant.* 2.2.2 κυπάριττος δὲ παρὰ μὲν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀπο σπέρματος, ἐν Κρήτῃ δὲ καὶ ἀπο τοῦ στελέχους,... *The cypress in most regions grows from seed, but in Crete from the trunk also*,... trans. Hort 1980, Pliny *NH* 16.141. Willetts 1962: 217, 241-2 cf. Cook 1940: 2.932– ‘the name Ida means ‘forest’ or ‘wood’ i.e. where cypress is found; for naturally-occurring cypress on Crete, see Theophrastus *Enq. Plant.* III.1.6, III.2.6, IV.1.3, IV.5.2 (trans. Hort 1980; see esp. 461).

<sup>285</sup> Bernabé 2004: 266 ‘El ciprés es un árbol sumamente característico de Creta y del monte Ida.’

<sup>286</sup> See e.g. Theophrastus *Enq. Plant.* 2.2.2; Sekunda 2000: 344-5.

<sup>287</sup> Trans. Collard and Cropp 2008a: 307; see also Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995: 68 n.4-8; see also Meiggs 1982: 78, 200 and 430; Hodge 1960: 124 in the context of temple ceilings at Epidauros.

with ritual, and in a Cretan context.<sup>288</sup> So, given the references in Pindar and Euripides, it could be suggested that Euripides' reference to cypress as the kind of timber used in a Cretan temple in *The Cretans* is in keeping with more widely-held fifth-century perceptions of the use of the wood in Cretan ritual.

There is also some evidence corroborating the notion that Athenian temple roofs of the classical era were similarly constructed from cypress-wood. Hodge's authoritative study of the woodwork of temple roofs in Attica has found that roofs of a few notable temples had cypress wood roofs, bonded with ox-glue similar to Euripides' Cretan temple.<sup>289</sup> The style of roof evoked suggests a familiarity by the audience with the kind of construction one could expect in a temple.<sup>290</sup> Here, the poet appears to be using elements and practices known from lived experiences; the notion of a distant temple of a perhaps lesser-known Cretan Zeus cult can be seen here to be linked to some kind of temple-building practice familiar to contemporary Athenians. Cretan architecture appears to be described in terms familiar to an Athenian audience who are, perhaps, reminded of their own architecture, evident in their own spheres of experience from within their city. From an Athenian

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<sup>288</sup> Pindar *Pythian* 5.39-40 (τό σφ' ἔχει κυπαρίσινον μέλαθρον ἀμφ' ἀνδριάντι σχεδόν, Κρηῆτες δὲ τοξοφόροι τέγει Παρνασσίῳ καθέσσαντο μονόδροπον φυτόν. 'And so, the shrine of the cypress wood holds it beside the statue hewn from a single trunk, which the bow-bearing Cretans set up in the chamber on Parnassos.' trans. Race 1997:305; see also Meiggs 1982: 200, 430; Hodge 1960: 124.

<sup>289</sup> Hodge 1960: 124, 126

<sup>290</sup> Rackham and Moody 1996: 126-7; Sekunda 2000: 345 and n.43.

perspective, the link to Crete is nevertheless suggested, given that Athenian temples could have been constructed using timber from the island.

We have so far seen how the references to the temple's status and detailed descriptions of the wood used in the ceiling's construction were plausibly devices used by the poet to position the Crete of the play in a contemporary, fifth-century context, adding a sense of 'authenticity' to existing mythical versions. The poet was perhaps using contemporary events and frameworks of reference to recreate elements of lived experiences in the play: the temple roof is similar to, and bearing resonances of, at least one Athenian equivalent.<sup>291</sup> Cretan architecture is 'made' Athenian; it is a feature that is evident from the audience's own spheres of experience in their city, not just something from an imagined, legendary creation on a distant island. As Easterling suggests, the evocation of distant places and features in tragedy can be thought of in terms of two specific notions: first, as 'a complimentary reference for Athens for the benefit of the Athenian audience'; secondly, as 'agreeable associations with other places' which 'point up the superiority of the Greek world'.<sup>292</sup> As already discussed, both these notions are suggested in various ways, in the detailed references to Zeus' temple in this work.

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<sup>291</sup> And, no doubt, many other Athenian and Greek temples, as Hodge 1960, and others propose.

<sup>292</sup> Easterling 1994: 77

The idea that the temple descriptions are grounded in some kind of materiality can be substantiated further by considering lines 6-7. There are detailed descriptions of how the wood beams were cut and joined, with Euripides describing precise and detailed carpentry skills.

τμηθεῖσα δοκοὺς Χαλύβῳ πελέκει  
καὶ ταυροδέτῳ κόλλῃ κραθεῖσ'  
ἀτρεκεῖς ἄρμους κυπάρισσος.

cut into beams with Chalybean axe and  
bonded in exact joints with ox-glue.

The spectator is told about the exact kind of axe used. The reference to the Chalybean axe is significant: as Cropp and Collard state, the 'Chalybeans were an iron-working people of northern Asia Minor',<sup>293</sup> and importantly, they appear to have had contact with Crete in the classical age.<sup>294</sup> Hesiod, Aeschylus, Xenophon, as well as Euripides, all make reference to the Chalybes and Chalybean steel in different works. First, in a scholion in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* concerning the Hesiodic fragment 217a [282 MW], *The Idaean Dactyls*, is found the following reference:

ferrum Hesiodus in Creta eos  
qui vocati sunt Dactyli Idaei.

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<sup>293</sup> Collard and Cropp 2008a: 539 n. 3; also Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995: 68 n.4-8; see also Piaskowski, 1998:65-67. The Chalybeans hailed from 'S.E. Black Sea lands northern Asia Minor.

<sup>294</sup> Willetts 1962: 217

Hesiod [thinks] that the use of iron [was discovered] in Crete by those who have been called the Idaean Dactyls.<sup>295</sup>

In Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* 727 and 730, we also find a similar reference to the strength of the material:

Χάλυβος Σκυθᾶν ἄποικος,  
πικρός ὠμόφρων Σίδαρος,

a Chalybian migrant from Scythia,  
cruel-hearted Iron.<sup>296</sup>

At *Prometheus Bound* 714-5, we also find:

λαϊᾶς δὲ χειρὸς οἱ σιδνροτέκτονες  
οἰκοῦσι Χάλυβες, οὓς φυλάξασθαί σε χρή.

Next, on your left, dwell the Chalybes,  
workers in iron.<sup>297</sup>

In Xenophon's *Anabasis* 5.5.1.3-5, references to the Chalybeans occur again in a similar context:

καὶ ἀφικνοῦνται εἰς Χάλυβας. οὗτοι ... καὶ ὁ βίος ἦν τοῖς πλείστοις  
αὐτῶν ἀπὸ σιδηρείας.

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<sup>295</sup> Most 2007: 294-5

<sup>296</sup> Trans. Sommerstein 2008b: 226-9 and n. 105, Chalybians famous as iron-workers.

<sup>297</sup> Trans. Sommerstein 2008b: 520-1



reaching then the land of the Chalybians. ... and most of them gained their livelihood from working in iron.<sup>298</sup>

Finally, at Euripides' *Alcestis* 980, we find:

καὶ τὸν ἐν Χαλύβοις δαμάζεις σὺ βία σίδαρον,  
οὐδέ τις ἀποτόμου λήματός ἐστιν αἰδῶς.

Even the iron of the Chalybes, you overcome with your violence, and there is no pity in your unrelenting heart.<sup>299</sup>

From *Alcestis*, we see that the poet draws attention to the quality and strength of the raw material. So, taking the references to Chalybean steel in Euripides, Hesiod, (possibly Aeschylus), and Xenophon together, there is the possibility that Euripides was, yet again, drawing on audience familiarity with the associations of the material with temple construction: an idea suggesting perhaps that no further elaborations were necessary.

In summary, then, dramatic as well as historiographical sources suggest a familiarity with the idea that iron of high quality was famously produced by the Chalybeans. An Athenian audience would most probably have been familiar with the reference in line 6 of *The Cretans* to the quality and strength of the Chalybean axe used to cut the temple roof timbers. Additionally, Willetts suggests that iron-coloured stones found

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<sup>298</sup> Trans. Brownson 1957: 130-1

<sup>299</sup> Trans. Kovacs 1995:259 and n. <sup>a</sup>: 'a people living on the Black Sea, said to have invented the working of iron.'

in Crete that look like human thumbs and regarded as ‘Zeus’ thunderbolts’, the *Idaei dactylīi*, were exported from Crete and used by Chalybeans in making steel.<sup>300</sup> This additional feature possibly strengthens the case further for suggesting that Euripides was deploying elements familiar in the fifth century, in providing such detailed descriptions of the temple construction in Crete. Just the use of the expression ‘Chalybean axe’ could have suggested to the audience all they needed to know about the kind of equipment used in the temple construction of this ‘imaginary’ Crete which increasingly however, appears grounded in some notion of familiar lived experiences.

Given that Chalybean steel is an imported element, an additional feature incorporated into the details of the temple construction can be discerned: a synthesis in the use of materials-both imported (steel), and local (wood). As Cozzoli states, the word Χαλύβω in line 6 is in opposition to αὐθιγενῆς ... κυπάρισσος from lines 5–8 indicating a mix of elements -both native to Crete as well imported to the island-used in the temple construction.<sup>301</sup> I propose that this synthesis of local and imported elements itself suggests a Crete that is *both* isolated and distant, *as well as* being connected to the outside world. In terms of the notion of insularity, these

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<sup>300</sup> Willetts 1962: 242 (also 217)

<sup>301</sup> Cozzoli 2001: 82; note also that the Chalybean steel axe in line 6 is forged out of Cretan (Dactylean) iron ore exported from Crete.

elements of being both isolated as well as connected at the same time, form part of a wider dynamic that, as I discuss later, shapes Euripides' construct of Cretanism.<sup>302</sup>

Apart from Chalybean steel another feature of Euripides' descriptions of the temple roof is worthy of further discussion: the use of ox-glue found in line 8, καὶ ταυροδέτῳ κόλλῃ κραθεῖσ'.<sup>303</sup> At least two features are notable here: first, that similar references to the use of ox-glue are also found in other sources from the classical age and later sources, indicating temple building practices familiar to Athenians and, therefore, plausibly also to an Athenian audience.<sup>304</sup> Secondly, the ox (the hooves of which produce the ox-glue) can be seen as an allusion to bovine imagery, a theme which recurs in *The Cretans* and other works on Crete (and considered in more detail in Chapter 4).

I suggest that if the descriptions of first the temple (line 4), then the roof (5) and finally the beams (6) are taken together, they mark a logical, architectural progression which mirror the order of construction of a material, recognizable temple. These detailed descriptions have an effect of positing the object described in some kind of an 'imagined lived experience'. The temple is constructed with

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<sup>302</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 2-3 for a discussion on islands as being connected to yet separate from the mainland.

<sup>303</sup> The glue is made from ox-hide; the implicit references to Cretanism via bovine connections can be discerned. See Cozzoli 2001: 82-3 for a detailed discussion on the ox glue and the word ταυροδέτο as *hapax legomena*. Also, the reference to bovine imagery as found in line 8 of the *Cretans* is possibly the first ever reference in Euripides' works to this recurring theme (see Chapter 3).

<sup>304</sup> See Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995: 68 n.4-8 cf. Aristotle *Hist. Anim.* 3.11, Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 11.231; Hodge 1960: 97, 126

material from lived experiences, and made of a recognizable architecture, while its use as the centre of worship of Zeus' cult is similarly comprehensible to an Athenian spectator. It appears from these features that the temple is located in a Crete that is becoming almost Athenian in its descriptions. As stated previously, much of the detail of the temple construction as it is represented in the opening lines of the *parados* find parallels with Attic designs (for example, as detailed in Hodge).<sup>305</sup> With reference to *The Cretans*, Euripides is perhaps fashioning Cretan myth, themes and images for an Athenian audience in much the same way as this temple has been 'constructed' and presented. As will be seen in this and following chapters, elements of myth and imagery familiar to Athens are used to shape the way Crete is represented in Euripides' works.

It can be argued, then, that in this passage as elsewhere in these 'Cretan plays', Athenian/Attic ('the mainland') perceptions are used to create a world of Crete ('the island') that might have been recognizable to Athenian audiences, thanks to the dramatist's use of poetic devices that include descriptions familiar to a spectator. Aspects of the temple construction and design in *The Cretans* could have had particular resonances with Athenian audiences – temples such as the Thesion (with a similarly-constructed oak roof) were well-known in the fifth century.<sup>306</sup> It is

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<sup>305</sup> Hodge 1960

<sup>306</sup> See Mills 1997: 35 'It is particularly appropriate and hardly accidental that the ceremony of bringing Theseus' bones back from Skyros to Athens to be buried in the middle of the city occurs in this era (in the Thesion, specially constructed between 450-415BC to house his remains; the period coincided with the time *The Cretans* was produced) - like the mark of a founding hero, making the

beginning to appear as if this Crete, posited in an Athenian time and place which is part of a lived experience, is how Euripides wishes to represent the island.<sup>307</sup> It appears as a construct formulated from an Athenian perspective, recognizable – and yet somehow different: distant, mysterious and other-worldly. As will be seen increasingly, this perception of ‘being like Athens, yet not *entirely* so’ is an important hallmark of Euripides’ Crete.

### 3.5 The Mount Ida of *The Cretans*

As stated previously, certain icons such as Mount Ida, a mountain which has strong mythological connections with Crete as the abode of Zeus and Europa, are also referred to in this passage. So, I next consider the implications of the reference to the Cretan Mount Ida in the context of Διὸς Ἰδαίου (Idaeian Zeus) as suggested in line 10. The phrase Διὸς Ἰδαίου is important as it sets the scene for the detailed descriptions to follow in the rest of the passage which are centered upon the rites of the Cretan cult of the Idaean Zeus. The references to Mount Ida and to the Cretan cult of the Idaean Zeus occur here in terms of the god’s ritual worship; mythological accounts refer to Zeus’ birth in the caves of that mountain on Crete.<sup>308</sup> This

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literal link between Athens and Theseus. Depicted in the Thesion are the works by the well-known painter Mikon showing the conflict or opposition between Theseus and the ruler of Crete, in direct terms.’ (my parenthesis)

<sup>307</sup> Certain historical events appear to emphasize this familiarity e.g. a much later treaty between the Kydonians and Appoloniats signed in 171 BC in the temple of Idaean Zeus in Crete; see Willetts 1955: 165 cf. Polybius 28.14.1 – 4; it points to the importance accorded to the temple of the Idaean Zeus on Crete. It is interesting to ponder on whether similar treaties could have been signed in the temple (or similar) in the fifth century BC. (However, there is no known evidence that this study has found to support this possibility.)

<sup>308</sup> See also Pindar *Olympian* 5.20 and the association of Zeus with ‘the sacred cave of Ida: Σωτήρ ὑψινεφές Ζεῦ, Κρόνιον τε ναίων λόφον τιμῶν τ’ Ἀλφεὸν εὐρὺν ῥέοντα Ἰδαῖον τε σεμνὸν

association between Mount Ida and Crete is made obvious first in Euripides' *The Cretans* f472.10 where the phrase Διὸς Ἰδαίου occurs. Later, in another fragment in the same play, Minos himself addresses his audience, presumably Cretan subjects, as 'children of Ida' at f472f, possibly suggesting that Cretans were perceived as being born in the gaze of the all-pervading mountain:

ἀλλ', ὦ Κρηῖτες, Ἰδαῖα τέκνα...

You Cretans, children of Ida!

Elsewhere in literature, contemporary references to the connections between the mountain and Crete can also be found. For example, we also saw an earlier reference to the Mount Ida of the Cretan myths in Bacchylides 17.29-33:

What if the noble daughter of Phoenix, maiden with love in her name,  
bore you, peerless among mortals, after union with Zeus under the  
brow of Mount Ida?<sup>309</sup>

This idea of Cretans as children of the holy mountain Ida is also picked up by Aristophanes and satirized as 'Euripides' Crete' at *Frogs* 1356 where it is repeated *verbatim*:

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ἄντρον, ἱκετὰς σέθεν ἔρχομαι Λυδίοις ἀπύων ἐν αὐλοῖς, *Saviour Zeus in the clouds on high, you who inhabit Kronos' hill, and honor the broad-flowing Alpheos and the sacred cave of Ida, as your suppliant I come, calling to the sound of Lydian pipes*, trans. Race 1997: 97 (see also n.4 - 'The scholia report a cave of Ida near Olympia, but the most famous was on Mt. Ida in Crete.').

<sup>309</sup> Trans. Campbell 1992: 218-9



The word used, *Peridaion*, a compound noun, perhaps also reflects a more general association between the mountain and the woods. It is possible that this notion of a connection between the cypress and Mount Ida, then, is one familiar to an Athenian audience. Such evocations appear to draw on aspects of the audience's familiarity with the Cretan Mount Ida in order to vividly recreate the landscape of the island, on stage.

Another aspect of the Cretan Mount Ida which could have been familiar to an Athenian audience was as the birth place of Zeus. The god has special significance to Crete, where he is both believed to have been born (in the Idaean caves), raised, and (in some accounts, at least) to have also died.<sup>313</sup>

Given that the Cretan Mount Ida was the site for the worship of a Zeus cult 'for over a millennium and well into Roman times', it is plausible that a spectator would be familiar with its significance in the context of the Crete of *The Cretans*.<sup>314</sup> A cave on the mountain is also thought to have been the centre of a cult associated with initiation. Initiation rites are described in lines 9 – 15. Given that early literary sources also make the connection between Mount Ida, Zeus and Crete, it is plausible that these allusions could further imply that the dramatist was grounding the

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<sup>313</sup> E.g. Callimachus, *Hymn to Zeus* 8-9. See also Armstrong 2006: 1-2 (and n. 2), 13

<sup>314</sup> See Willetts 1962: 144, and notes 27 and 28 on Zeus' Mt. Ida on Crete; also Willetts 1977: 203.



description of the mountain and its associated religious rites within the perceptions of Crete held by a fifth-century Athenian spectator.

In summary, the feature that appears to be emerging with regard to the deployment of Mount Ida is one which draws on audience familiarity with the fifth-century notion that the mountain was famous in terms of the myths of Crete, and deployed as such in Euripides' work.

### 3.6 Religious rites and the representation of a 'Cretan religion'

Having previously discussed the protagonists and the temple in detail, in this next section, I consider the depiction of religious rites of the Cretan Zeus cult contained in the third part of f472, the parados, 9–19:

ἀγνὸν δὲ βίον τείνομεν ἐξ οὗ  
Διὸς Ἰδαίου μύστης γενόμεν 10  
καὶ νυκτιπόλου Ζεγρέως Βούτης  
τὰς ὠμοφάγους δαΐτας τελέσας,  
Μητρὶ τ' ὀρεΐᾳ δᾶδας ἀνασχῶν  
μετὰ Κουρήτων  
Βάκχος ἐκλήθην ὀσιωθεὶς. 15  
πάλλευκα δ' ἔχων εἴματα φεύγω  
γένεσιν τε Βροτῶν καὶ νεκροθήκας  
οὐ χριμπτόμενος, τήν τ' ἐμψύχων  
βρῶσιν ἐδεστῶν πεφύλαγμαι.

Pure is the life I have led since I became an initiate of Idaean Zeus and a servitor of night-ranging Zagreus, performing his feasts of raw flesh; and raising torches high to the Mountain Mother among the Curetes, I was consecrated and named a celebrant. In clothing all of white I shun the birthing of men,

and the places of their dead, I do not go near; against the eating of animal foods I have guarded myself.

As suggested previously, 'the Cretans' of the title of the play most likely refers to the Chorus of priests or Elders. So, judging by the title alone, the importance of the Elders' provenance as Cretans *per se* is stressed as is their role in the cultic rites as described in lines 9–19 above.

The lines 9-19 can be considered in three parts: the Chorus as initiates of the Idaean Zeus (9-10); the Chorus as herdsmen of the nocturnal Zagreus (11-12); and the Chorus as celebrants of the Mountain Mother (13-15).

Each of these three notions is now considered in turn. First, in lines 9-10, we find:

ἄγνὸν δὲ βίον τείνομεν ἐξ οὗ  
Διὸς Ἰδαίου μύστης γενόμεν

Pure is the life I have led since  
I became an initiate of Idaean Zeus.

Here the Chorus defines its beliefs and its practices, using the words ἄγνὸν δὲ βίον τείνομεν. From the next words, ἐξ οὗ, to the end of line 15, ὁσιωθείς, a preceding condition of initiation rites is described. These are a pre-requisite to the Chorus' current religious life. Lines 16 – 19 then proceed to express the fundamentals of the Chorus' current state of beliefs, that is to say, it elaborates in some detail the idea it

started with in line 9, its declaration of the ‘purity of life’.<sup>315</sup> The phrase ἀγνὸν δὲ βίον τείνομεν (9) both summarises and anticipates what then follows, connecting a sense of the present (their current life of purity), with what has passed (their initiation into this life). The very first word in line 9, ἀγνόν also relates back to, and accords with ζαθέους ναούς in line 4, the ‘most holy temple’ in whose construction we observed the incorporation of various elements of this ‘purity’: native cypress-wood, the use of Chalybean steel, and exact joints of the beams.

Similar notions of ‘purity’ also find echoes in Euripides’ *Bacchae* 74, εἰδὼς βιοτὰν ἀγιστεύει, ‘makes his life pure’,<sup>316</sup> where it also forms part of a cult-hymn with a similar emphasis in lines 73-81:

ὦ μάκαρ, ὅστις εὐδαίμων τελετὰς θεῶν  
 εἰδὼς βιοτὰν ἀγιστεύει  
 καὶ θιασεύεται ψυ  
 χὰν ἐν ὄρεσσι βακχεύων  
 ὁσίοις καθαρμοῖσιν,  
 τὰ τε ματρὸς μεγάλας ὄργια  
 Κυβέλας θεμιτεύων,  
 ἀνὰ θύρσον τε τινάσσων,  
 κισσῶ τε στεφανωθεὶς  
 Διόνυσον θεραπεύει.

O blessed the man who,  
 happy in knowing the gods’ rites,  
 makes his life pure  
 and joins his soul to the worshipful band,  
 performing bacchic rites upon the mountains,

<sup>315</sup> See Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995: 69 notes 9-15, and Bernabé 2004: 257-286, esp. 270-285 for fuller discussions on Euripides’ Cretan religion.

<sup>316</sup> Trans. Kovacs 2002b: 19

with cleansings the gods approve:  
he performs the sacred mysteries  
Of Mother Cybele of the mountains,  
and shaking the bacchic wand up and down,  
his head crowned with ivy,  
he serves Dionysus.<sup>317</sup>

The other features which are similar in both *The Cretans* and *The Bacchae* are the detailed descriptions of the Bacchic rites in lines 75-81 above, which appear similar to the rites of the Idaean Zagreus of lines 11-19 of the Cretan play. As will be seen later in this chapter, the dramatist appears to include aspects of Bacchic worship in the works paralleling the references to Cretan religious rites. The elements of purity, Bacchic rites and sacred mysteries of the Mountain Mother which are associated with Dionysiac worship also appear to refer back to the rites of the Idaean Zeus on Crete. In *The Cretans* specifically, these associations appear to be presented as part of a synthesis of various Cretan religious rites.

This notion of a synthesis of different elements of religious rites being presented as 'Cretan religion' can also be discerned if we consider lines 10-14 of *The Cretans* together. Here, we can glean cultic connections between three divinities: the Idaean Zeus, Zagreus and the Mountain Mother (and her worshippers, the Curetes) mentioned together, Διὸς Ἰδαίου ... καὶ νυκτιπόλου Ζεγρέως ... Μητρὶ τ' ὀρεΐα ... μετὰ Κουρήτων, which could suggest a representation of the Cretan religion as

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<sup>317</sup> Trans. Kovacs 2002b: 19

perceived by, and possibly familiar to, an Athenian spectator.<sup>318</sup> There is some material evidence to suggest the existence of a Dionysian cult on Crete. The discovery of a document from Chania, Crete, points to cultic associations of a group comprising the Idaean Zeus, Dionysus, Zagreus and the Mountain Mother in Crete, as well as in other parts of the Greek world, from the second millennium BC onwards.<sup>319</sup> One response, therefore, would be to consider these rites of the Idaean Zeus as relating to general ancient Cretan cultic practice (see later for a more detailed discussion).<sup>320</sup>

Another element involving audience perception can be seen in the *parados*: much information can be found here for the spectator, relating to Minos, his pedigree, the Cretan temple of the Idaean Zeus and cultic practices. This feature of providing specific information to the audience perhaps reinforces the earlier arguments of how Euripides was using a combination of previously known elements from myth (for example, Zeus' Cretan origins) and aspects of lived experiences (for example, the temple) to create a fusion which built and played on audience familiarity.

So far in *The Cretans*, we have seen references to the Corybantes and the Mountain Mother. There also appear to be perceptible links between Zeus and the Cretan Mount Ida. In this work, the poet appears to stress particular religious rites

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<sup>318</sup> See Cozzoli 2001: 18 n. 2.1

<sup>319</sup> Notably, Lesbos and Samia. See Cozzoli 2001: 18-19 n. 2.1

<sup>320</sup> See also Bernabé 2004: 273 cf. West 2003: 170

associated with Crete perhaps in order to reinforce already held perceptions of what Cretan religion might have represented to fifth-century Athenian spectators.

Without doubt, the portrayal of Cretan religious rites in *The Cretans* brings with it its own fair share of difficulties for interpretation. However, it is outside the ambit of this thesis to consider the evidence for the verisimilitude of accounts by Euripides as trustworthy chronicler of various Cretan cults. Instead, I concur with Bernabé who suggests that what is presented in this play is an account that would have appeared plausible to Euripides' Athenian audience.<sup>321</sup> As in the case of Mount Ida seen earlier, so too in the case of Cretan religion: Euripides appears to draw on general perceptions of the audience in the works seen so far. An audience finds in them many features of Crete that are familiar, as well as those that are possibly completely unfamiliar to them. Euripides appears to be playing with some aspects of commonly held perceptions, first presenting and then problematizing them.<sup>322</sup> As we shall see in other areas of this study, one overall effect appears to be that these commonly held perceptions of the island are challenged and restated in novel, ground-breaking ways.

The poet also appears to problematize such representations by juxtaposing 'conservative Cretan religion'<sup>323</sup> with the bizarre, for example, in the form of the birth of the Minotaur. Euripides challenges us to reconcile the Crete of ancient religion

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<sup>321</sup> Bernabé 2004: 273 cf. West 2003: 170

<sup>322</sup> E.g. I discuss in Chapter 5 how Minos displays monstrous traits alongside his heroic qualities.

<sup>323</sup> E.g. Plato *Minos* 318c-d, 321b: Crete as 'the source of the most ancient and best laws'.

with the land of monsters and bizarre events. As we see in the course of this play, this juxtaposition of 'normality and the revered' with the 'monstrosity and the bizarre' is another key concept of Euripides' Cretanism. This contradiction is exemplified perfectly, as we have seen, in *The Cretans*: Zeus' union with Europa produced three 'normal' heroes in Minos, Rhadamanthys and Sarpedon. Zeus' metamorphosis has the effect, as Buxton puts it, of placing 'their union within a sanctioning, normalizing framework, which is confirmed when Europa gives birth to three unmonstrous heroes of Crete.'<sup>324</sup> On the other hand, as the play progresses, we see in Pasiphae's copulation with Poseidon's bull, a daring act of transgression producing a monster, the hybrid Minotaur, as an offspring. A monster is potentially 'chaotic, conforming to no existing class';<sup>325</sup> yet, based on the existing fragments of *The Cretans*, the Minotaur displays no obvious signs of monstrosity (although, admittedly, it is impossible to state this categorically, given the very fragmentary nature of the evidence.) On the contrary, as I discuss in Chapter 4, the Minotaur in *The Cretans* shows positive attributes of human-like behaviour. So, as we shall see taking the work as a whole, if the monster and Cretan heroes are considered alongside one another, we can discern that the poet first highlights and then problematizes this potential opposition: the physical abnormality of the Minotaur is juxtaposed with its 'normal behaviour'. On the other hand, Minos' is revered as ruler of Crete, yet his tyrannical ways show him up to be a 'monster'. This feature,

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<sup>324</sup> Buxton 2009: 160

<sup>325</sup> Buxton 1994: 205

an important aspect of Cretanism which highlights the humanness of monsters and the monstrosity of humans, is elaborated upon in Chapter 5.<sup>326</sup>

### 3.7 Salient features of Cretanism

Overall, based on the analyses of the close readings of the one fragment, f472, the following salient points can be discerned in terms of Cretanism: the poet establishes a Crete whose history originates with Zeus and Europa as the ‘founders’ of the House of Minos, personages who also serve to establish and enhance Minos’ own pedigree. This Euripidean version of the Cretans appears to draw on the versions from epic, literature and history portraying Minos as king of a powerful multi-cited Crete.

The Crete of this play is portrayed as a centre of great importance for the Cretan Zeus cult, with the temple at the centre of the cult where archaic religion is practised. It alludes to the prevailing view in the fifth century that the birth of Zeus occurred on Mount Ida, and that other significant events in the god’s life also took place on the island. The reference to an Idaean Zeus is one ingredient of Cretanism which links Zeus, Mount Ida and the Minos mythologies with Crete, possibly portraying Zeus’ cult worship in a manner familiar to an Athenian spectator. The references to rites as well as notions of purity and piety from Cretan religion help to provide

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<sup>326</sup> As I suggest later, this is part of (and in keeping with) a more general Euripidean trope of barbarous Greeks and humane barbarians etc.



further insights into the way that Cretan religion and Cretanism were represented by the poet combining elements that were familiar, lesser-known and possibly, invented. These perceptions in turn played on pre-existent views of Crete, already held by the Athenian spectator.

The theme of bovine imagery, first seen in association with Phaedra in Chapter 2, also resurfaces here in *The Cretans* in a different guise. Even the language used to evoke the Cretan Zeus cult temple hints at the idea of the bovine.<sup>327</sup> As we shall see later, the bovine-related theme is significant in *The Cretans* – as the story unfolds, Pasiphae falls in love and mates with a bull, and gives birth to the Minotaur, a half-human, half-bull.

Other significant aspects of the opening lines include references to Cretan architecture, which is contextualized and made Athenian in order to remind the Athenian audience of their own temple architecture, evident in their own spheres of experience from within their city.<sup>328</sup> Literary syncretism is a device the poet appears to draw upon, combining familiar elements based on Athenian perceptions of Crete with less familiar (and possibly invented) elements. So far, then, it has been suggested that both references to Euripides' Cretan temple's status and detailed descriptions of the wood used in the ceiling's construction were examples of devices

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<sup>327</sup> E.g. the use of the term 'ox-glue' in line 8.

<sup>328</sup> E.g. the construction of the Thesion in Athens.

used by the poet to position the Crete of the play in a contemporary, fifth-century Athenian context, adding a sense of 'authenticity' to the mythical story. The poet was using contemporary events and frameworks of reference possibly to make references to lived experiences of the Athenian audiences, in the play: the temple roof is similar to, and can be recognizable from Athenian temples of the period.<sup>329</sup> This combination of the audience's familiarity with Euripides' representation of the myths in combination with aspects of lived experiences is, I suggest, a powerful tool used to shape audience responses to the work.

Taking the various references to aspects of Cretanism that appear within *The Cretans*, these appear mainly to occur in terms of references to protagonists (e.g. the Elders refer to Minos and Pasiphae, Minos and Pasiphae to each other, and to the Minotaur), mythological characters (e.g. Zeus, Europa), the landscape (e.g. Mount Ida), religious rites (e.g. worship of the Idaean Zeus), and architecture (e.g. Zeus' temple). Generally speaking, each set of references appear to emphasise particular facets of the island, as suggested here. The overall effect appears to reinforce particular aspects of the island familiar to Athenian audiences, or to create new versions (this study does not seek to differentiate between these types of evidence). So, while in *Hippolytus*, we found examples of self-referencing by Phaedra or references to her Cretan-ness by the Chorus, in this work, the references are

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<sup>329</sup> And, no doubt, many other Attic temples, as Hodge 1960 and others propose.

generated within the island by characters and characteristics associated with the island, as clear examples of the notion of Cretanism.

Overall, then, this Crete of *The Cretans* is constructed as a fusion: it is one formulated from a perspective which is recognizably Athenian – and *yet* at the same time, it is different: distant and mysterious. As will be seen in the rest of this study, this combination of ‘same in some ways but different in others’ will be an important hallmark in challenging some commonly-held perceptions of Crete, as will be seen in the chapters to follow.

## Chapter 4:

### Bovine imagery and Cretanism

#### 4.1 Introduction

In previous chapters I noted the recurring image of the bull in passages with a Cretan influence – such as Phaedra's allusions to her mother's love affair with a bull and a reference to Zeus' bull in the first few opening lines of *The Cretans* as well as a bovine reference as part of Cretan temple architecture. In this chapter, I look in more detail at bovine imagery and explore how it works as a constant and consistent part of Euripides' representation of Crete. In fact, I will argue that the bovine references in Euripides' 'Cretan plays' are a key element to our understanding of Euripides' representation of Cretanism. The poet appears to continually examine the theme of bovine imagery and to re-define its representations from earlier tragedy in paradoxical and novel ways - in particular, representations of the cow, the bull and the Minotaur. Euripides seems to re-examine these representations by looking at the human-ness of creatures and the animal nature of humans together with the interplay of the respective gods' roles, thus scrutinizing the nature of differences between man, animal and gods. I develop these ideas on 'human *v.* animal *v.* gods' in the course of this and chapters following, and discuss the triadic treatment of gods, humans and beasts.

I begin by considering these three instantiations of bovine imagery-the cow, the bull and the Minotaur-in two of Euripides' plays in particular, *The Cretans* and *Theseus*, while drawing on my earlier discussions of *Hippolytus*. As in the previous chapter, I also deal here with Euripides' fragmentary works which feature Crete; as previously, the same considerations given there on the use of fragmentary evidence, the lacunae and issues of plot reconstructions, also apply to the passages from *The Cretans* and *Theseus* that I discuss here.<sup>330</sup>

The structure of the rest of this chapter is as follows: first, I discuss in brief the popularity of bovine imagery, in particular, the Minotaur, in the works of the classical age.<sup>331</sup> Following this, I consider in detail the relationships between the bull, the cow and the Minotaur and the protagonists, under the headings of Zeus' bull, Poseidon's bull, Pasiphae's cow, and the Minotaur. Finally, in my concluding section, I consider some wider themes emerging from my analysis of bovine imagery, such as the multiple natures of humans, animals and gods, and Crete as the setting for bizarre events where natural laws appear to be turned upside down. I consider the notion of multiple identities more generally where it appears that more than one set of opposing ideas -light/dark, male/female, animal/man etc.- exist at the same time.

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<sup>330</sup> Reference is also made to Euripides' other fragmentary plays, in particular to *Cretan Women*.

<sup>331</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a:529-533.

## 4.2 Bovine imagery in classical drama

If there is one single motif from material culture which an Athenian spectator of the classical age might have associated with the strangeness of Crete and its mythologies, it is probably that of the Minotaur, half-man, half-bull. The fascination with the creature in classical Athens is evident from its popularity as a leitmotif on fifth-century pots and vases.<sup>332</sup> Equally, frequent literary references to the Minotaur also attest to its popularity: it is likely that a number of tragedies featured the Minotaur. Apart from Euripides, the surviving titles of plays allude to the possibility that the Minotaur along with the bull and the cow, were featured in other works.<sup>333</sup> These include Aeschylus' *Cressae* and a number of works of Sophocles such as *Phaedra*, *Polyidus*, *Daedalus*, *Theseus*, *Camici* (or *Minos*). In addition, Cantarella proposes that other playwrights whose works are also likely to have featured bovine creatures include: Aristophanes, Plato and Eubulus (or Philippus) all of whom wrote plays called *Daedalus*; Aristonymus, Achaëus, Theopompus, Anaxandrides and Diphilus who each wrote a *Theseus*; Nicochares, and Apollophanes, who each wrote *The Cretans*; Antiphanes and Alexis, a *Minos* each,

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<sup>332</sup> The most popular depictions of the Minotaur of the period are in the context of the confrontation between the monster and Theseus, as well as the slaying of the creature by the Athenian hero (Mills 1997: 19 and n. 70. cf. Boardman 1975: 1 'There are over 300 in black figure': Brommer 1982:37. Other striking images include a touching portrayal of a baby Minotaur on the lap of a doting Pasiphaë (Etruscan cup, *LIMC* VII.2: 132 pl. 25, 'Pasiphaë'). While it is not being claimed that any of these scenes necessarily depict those from Euripides' works, the representations do nevertheless attest to the popularity of the Minotaur in fifth-century culture.

<sup>333</sup> Rosenquist 1978 :21, 22, 24, Cantarella 1964: 157

and Alcaeus, who wrote a *Pasiphae*.<sup>334</sup> None of these works survives, but their existence certainly bears testimony to the popularity of the Cretan cycle of myths. Euripides' portrayals of the Minotaur were, in themselves, outstanding in many respects and remained famous for a long time after the classical age.<sup>335</sup>

### 4.3 Zeus' bull

In Euripides' play, *The Cretans*, the episode involving Zeus' abduction of Europa and her conveyance to Crete is alluded to in its opening lines. In that work, bovine-related vocabulary such as ταύρος and βούς, and related compounds, including *hapax legomena* (such as ταυροδέτος) occur with some frequency in the fragments 472, 472b, and 472e.<sup>336</sup> From the one hundred and fifteen or so surviving lines from the play, at least six bull-related and two cow-related references occur. Although the creature is not referred to directly as 'the Minotaur' in the fragments, there are explicit references to it in f472b. These oft-repeated references to the bull and the cow, in addition to contributing to the plot, could also have played on and built on the audience's familiarity with bull-related themes in the context of Crete and its myths.<sup>337</sup> Earlier in Chapter 3, I discussed the very first passage: I suggested that line

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<sup>334</sup> See Cantarella 1964: 158

<sup>335</sup> See e.g. the references to Euripides' work in Plutarch, *Life of Theseus* XV. 2.

<sup>336</sup> The word ταυροδέτος is one that apparently occurs only once within the text.

<sup>337</sup> Material evidence certainly substantiates the notion that bulls played an important role in ancient Cretan culture. See e.g. Niniou-Kindeli 2003: 135 cf. Leveque, Sechan 1990: 107– religious rituals associated with Poseidon and bull-leaping, an ancient sport, were found in the Minoan civilisation from 2500BC; also, votive offerings in the form of terracotta bulls found in a temple of the Cretan Poseidon, are known from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. (ibid: 132). These manifestations from ancient Cretan culture could have reinforced a fifth-century Athenian audience's view of the connections of bovine imagery to Crete.

1 of the parados in f472 of *The Cretans* contains possibly the first ever allusion to bovine imagery in Euripides' works by its reference to the Zeus and Europa story.<sup>338</sup>

It recalls Zeus' abduction of Europa and her carriage to Crete on a bull:

ΧΟΡΟΣ  
Φοινικογενοῦς τέκνον Εὐρώπης  
καὶ τοῦ μεγάλου Ζηνός,

Chorus:  
Son of Phoenician-born Europa and of great Zeus.<sup>339</sup>

The allusion to the bull in connection with Europa's story is generally significant in Euripides' works. As will be explored in this chapter, there are different aspects of the bull's nature which appear to afflict each of the Cretan royal personages with a kind of madness. These aspects articulate tensions within them such as beauty and infatuation, coupled with seduction, deception, and danger leading to a certain brand of sexual frenzy related to the bovine. They appear to be brought about variously under the auspices of Zeus, Poseidon, and Aphrodite: Zeus' bull kidnaps Europe by treacherous means from Phoenicia to Crete in order to satisfy the god's lust for the princess; Poseidon's handsome bull which Minos secretes away for himself and with which Pasiphae falls in love; and Aphrodite, who incites Pasiphae with a mad lust for the bull.

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<sup>338</sup> See Ch. 3.2.

<sup>339</sup> Trans. Collard and Cropp 2008a:537-9



Other works of Euripides pick up this bovine-related theme in connection with Europa: a direct reference to Europa and her great-great grandmother, Io, and their common link with the bovine is evident in another Euripides fragment, *Hypsipyle* f752g:

ΧΟΡΟΣ:

παρὰ σοφῶν ἔκλυον λόγο[υ]ς	
πρότερον ὥς ἐπὶ κυμάτων	
πόλιν καὶ πατρίους δόμου[ς]	20
Ποίνικος Τυρία παῖς	
Εὐρώπα λιποῦσ' ἐπέβα	
Διοτρόφον Κρήταν ἱερὰν	
Κουρήτων τροφὸν ἀνδρῶν,	
ἅ τέκνων ἀρότοις[ι]ν	25
τρισοῖς ἔλιπεν κρά[τος]	
χώρας τ' ὄλβιον ἀρχάν.	
Ἀργείαν θ' ἑτέραν κλύω	
λέκ]τρῳ βασίλειαν Ἰῶ	
...]φας ἀμφὶς ἀμεῖψαι	30
κερ]ασφόρον ἄταν.	
ταῦ]τ' ἦν θεὸς εἰς φροντίδα θῆ σοι	
...']·[.]ς δῆ, φίλα, τὸ μέσον	
] ἀπολείψει	
..... π]ατέρος πατέρα	35
.....]τεχει σέθεν	
.....] ὠκύπορο[ς ] μετανίσεται	

Chorus:

From learned storytellers I have heard how once Phoenix's daughter  
 from Tyre, Europa, left city and father's home<sup>340</sup> 20  
 and went on the waves to sacred Crete, nurse of Zeus and

<sup>340</sup> With P. Oxy.'s reading, "how once the Tyrian girl Europa left city and father's home in Phoenicia..." Zeus took the form of a bull to carry Europa across the sea from Tyre to Crete; their sons were Minos, Rhadamanthys and Sarpedon were born from that union, cf. *Cretans* f472. 1-3, *Phrixus* f820.

the Curetes;<sup>341</sup> to her threefold harvest of children she left power and prosperous government of the land. And another princess, I hear, the Argive Io, at her mating exchanged the horn-bearing affliction (of her form?). If god puts (these things) into your thoughts, (you will) surely (cherish?) moderation, dear friend...will (not?) desert you...your father's father of/for you...will come in pursuit...<sup>342</sup>

Lines 19-28 recall explicitly the stories involving Europa's journey to Crete in the service of Zeus. They then connect the tale in the very following sentence (at lines 28-30) to 'the Argive Io'.<sup>343</sup> In the mythologies connecting Zeus and Io, the latter was turned into a heifer by the god to protect her against the wrath of Hera. Io 'wandered the earth until, in Egypt, the god restored her human form and impregnated her with a son, Epaphus'.<sup>344</sup> Epaphus was himself Europa's great-grandfather.<sup>345</sup> This direct blood-line could explain the references in rapid succession to both personages in *Hypsipyle* f752g.20 and 29. Here in this play, allusions to the bovine are made explicit by the adjective κεϛ]ασφόρον, 'horn-bearing'; this reference to Io could be seen to link the stories of both royal women through a bovine connection: Io as a heifer, and Europa crossing the Cretan seas on a bull, both brought about through the agencies of Zeus. We can also discern another

<sup>341</sup> Young male devotees of Zeus cf. *Cretans* f472. 13-15 with note 5 (Cropp and Collard 2008a: 539).

<sup>342</sup> trans. Collard and Cropp 2008b: 271

<sup>343</sup> Herodotus also describes Io in similar terms in Hdt. 1.1.3.

<sup>344</sup> Collard and Cropp 2008b: 273

<sup>345</sup> See Hard 2008: 697 (Table 4); 700-701 (Tables 7-8).

common theme linking Io in *Hypsipyle* to Pasiphae in *The Cretans*; in *Hypsipyle*

f752g.26-31, we saw:

Ἄργειαν θ' ἑτέραν κλύω  
λέκ]τρῳ βασίλειαν Ἴω  
...]φας ἀμφὶς ἀμεῖψαι                      30  
κερ]ασφόρον ἄταν.

And another princess, I hear, the Argive Io, at her mating  
exchanged the horn-bearing affliction (of her form?).

Io, having been changed into a cow by Zeus for her own safety, was metamorphosed back into human form by the god, who then mated with her. In *The Cretans*, in the case of Pasiphae, the queen, through the assumption of her disguise as a decoy cow, 'changes' from human form into animal, enabling her to mate with a bull. Zeus' hand in Io's transformation is explicit in the first case. It is also not difficult to imagine that the god is implicated in Pasiphae's story too, given Zeus' close relationship with his brother, Poseidon. As I discuss later, both Zeus and Poseidon are inextricably linked with the bulls and the cow in the stories of Io, Europa, and Pasiphae.<sup>346</sup> Furthermore, this bovine theme is found not only in *The Cretans*, *Hippolytus* and *Hypsipyle* but also, as I discuss later, in *Theseus*.

The two passages referred to so far from *The Cretans* and *Hypsipyle* respectively, in connection with Io's and Pasiphae's stories also highlight the links between animal

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<sup>346</sup> For example, in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus is visited by Io who is fleeing a lustful Zeus; the god had turned Io into a cow, pursued by a gadfly sent by Hera all the way from Argos. Like Europa, Io is the victim of Zeus' lust.

disguise, secrecy, and revelation. In Io's case, Zeus turned her into a heifer in secret, so she could escape Hera's wrath for being Zeus' lover. Io's punishment was to wander the four corners of the earth pursued by maddening gadflies. Her story has, possibly, a more fortunate ending than Pasiphae's given that Zeus 'rescues' Io by turning her back into a human.<sup>347</sup> In Pasiphae's case, her transgressions (which included a plot between her and Daedalus which was kept secret from Minos) were eventually discovered by the Cretan king; her punishment was death 'in a hidden prison'.<sup>348</sup> The dynamics of transmogrifications and animal disguises involve a degree of secrecy, which, if and when revealed, have dire consequences.

A reference in *The Cretans* to the 'maddening cattle-fly' bears a strong resemblance to the gadflies which pursued Io and nearly drove her mad (see above). The Nurse in *The Cretans* describes the Minotaur to a curious Minos who wishes to know more about its appearance. It is striking to find such a similar reference to a 'cattle-fly' in the context of the Minotaur at f472b.35:<sup>349</sup>

<ΤΡΟΦΟΣ>  
 μύ]ωπος οἷστρου κέρκον [

<Nurse>:  
 ...a tail... (against?) the maddening cattle-fly.

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<sup>347</sup> The god proceeds to then mate with her; from this union we can see the beginnings of the royal line of Crete. See e.g. Hard 2008: 697, Table 4 of the schema of the early Inachids.

<sup>348</sup> *The Cretans* f472e.47

<sup>349</sup> This passage f472b as a whole is considered in more detail later in this chapter.

Such iconic bovine imagery, I suggest, serves another function: it emphasizes certain key aspects of Cretanism linking the bovine to Crete, as also seen in *Hippolytus*.<sup>350</sup> I suggested earlier in Chapter 2 that Phaedra's exclamations at *Hippolytus* 343 refer obliquely to the curse of unfortunate and sinful love inherited not just from her mother, Pasiphae, but also, by implication, from Europa, her paternal grandmother, and even further back, from Io, Europa's great-great grandmother:

ἐκεῖθεν ἡμεῖς, οὐ νεωστί, δυστυχεῖς.

From far back came my woe, not from recent times!

So, if the reference to 'far back' is indeed to Io, then it could be suggested that this curse carries with it a bovine dimension. Such bovine dimensions can be observed in Euripides' work linking Io, Europa, and Pasiphae: a nexus of imagery relating Crete's women to the bull and the cow.

In summary, the stories of Io and Europa suggest a 'a twofold nature', διπλῆ φύσει<sup>351</sup> in the various aspects of bovine imagery encountered in Euripides' works. I suggest this comprises a wider notion, a multi-faceted, multi-aspectual nature; for example, in the case of the bull, this can be expressed in terms of a physical change, with potential multiple identities as seen in the cases of *Hypsipyle*, and *The Cretans*

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<sup>350</sup> There could, of course, be more of such references in *The Cretans*, lost to us.

<sup>351</sup> A phrase from *The Cretans* f472b.29

respectively: Io's transmogrification into a cow, and back again to human form.<sup>352</sup>

Pasiphae disguises herself as a cow, mates with a bull, and begets a half-man, half-bull, the Minotaur. These multiple natures also express themselves in terms of esoteric, implicit multiple identities<sup>353</sup> -the bull's many attributes of beauty in its various forms (physical appearance, nature etc.) are tinged with the dangers of seduction and deception; the creature provides safety, but it also conveys its victims to danger.<sup>354</sup> The bull appears as the active agent whose actions prompt those associated with it into secrecy and silence, which in turn, is countered by revelation and exposure (as seen in *Hippolytus* and *The Cretans*). I propose that these aspects of multiple identities surfacing here in relation to Zeus' bull also resonate with Poseidon's bull, Pasiphae's cow, and the Minotaur - a theme I shall develop later in course of this chapter.

#### 4.3.1 Bovine imagery in the parados f472 *The Cretans*

Apart from its associations with Crete's women, bovine imagery is also manifest in Euripides' works in other implicit ways: I next consider another reference to Zeus' bull found in the opening passage f472 of *The Cretans* – the ox-glue used in the construction of Zeus' temple. As we saw earlier in Chapter 3 on f472:

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<sup>352</sup> I refer to 'multiple identity' in two senses in this thesis, here, in the sense of a two-stage change, either as a change from A to B, or a change from A to B and back to A; I have also used it in another sense to suggest a display of a range of characteristics of the animal in a human and vice-versa.

<sup>353</sup> Here, 'multiple identity' refers to 'double-aspectual' nature e.g. for the bull, on the one hand, beauty, on the other, deception. (See also previous note).

<sup>354</sup> For example, Zeus safely carries Europa over the treacherous waters of the Cretan sea; however, Europa realises before long that she has been kidnapped and is being taken to a foreign land (Crete) far from home (Phoenicia).

οὐς αὐθιγενῆς στεγανούς παρέχει  
τμηθεῖσα δοκοὺς Χαλύβω πελέκει  
καὶ ταυροδέτῳ κόλλη κραθεῖς'  
ἀτρεκεῖς ἄρμους κυπάρισσος.

the most holy temple whose roof is provided from  
native cypress-wood cut into beams with Chalybean axe and  
bonded in exact joints with ox-glue.

The singular occurrence of the phrase in f472.7, ταυροδέτον κόλλα, 'made from a bull's hide', provides an indication as to how Euripides weaves bovine imagery into this work. The glue itself is used to join together cut cypress timbers of the roof in the temple of Zeus. The word is likely to refer to glue made from the blood, skin, or hoof of a bull.<sup>355</sup> In any case, the product is thought to be derived from the body of a bull. The word can be seen as an example of a device used by the poet to reiterate bovine imagery: here, it is used in the context of the construction of an important temple of the Cretan Zeus (discussed in Chapter 3). It also comes only four lines after the opening line at f472.1 where is found an allusion to Europa's bull. The *hapax legomenon* at line 7 has the effect of emphasizing Europa's back-story relating to Zeus and his bull. Given the significance of the bull in that story, the poet is possibly 'constructing' a temple to the god imbued with the imagery most associated with Zeus in the context of the Cretan myths. The word ταυροδέτῳ therefore also anticipates other bovine references to come later in the play - the bull, and its related variants - the cow, and the Minotaur. Line f472.7 suggests not just the connections

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<sup>355</sup> See Bernabé 2004: 267-70

between humans and the bovine but also gods – Zeus as well as his temples.<sup>356</sup> The reference to ox-glue, then, is not only significant in itself, it also heralds other bovine imagery to follow later in the play.

#### 4.4 Poseidon's bull

Having considered Zeus' bull in Euripides' 'Cretan plays', I now turn to another bull, that of his brother, Poseidon. The passage that refers to Poseidon's bull is found in *The Cretans* f472e.5-26:

##### ΠΑΣΙΦΑΗ

ἀρνούμενη μὲν οὐκετ' ἄν πίθοιμί σε·  
 πάντως γὰρ ἤδη δηλον ὥς ἔχει τάδε. 5  
 ἐγ[ὼ] γὰρ εἰ μὲν ἀνδρὶ προύβαλον δέμας  
 τοῦμὸν, λαθραίαν ἐμπολωμένη Κύπριν,  
 ὀρθῶς ἄν ἤδη μάχ[λο]ς οὔσ' ἐφαινόμην·  
 νῦν δ', ἐκ θεοῦ γὰρ προσβολῆς ἐμηνάμην,  
 ἀλγῶ μὲν, ἐστὶ δ' οὐχ ἐκο[ύσ]ιον κακόν. 10  
 ἔχει γὰρ οὐδεν εἰκός· ἐς τί γὰρ βοὸς  
 βλέψας' ἐδήχθην θυμὸν αἰσχίστη νόσῳ;  
 ὥς εὐπρεπῆς μὲν ἐν πέπλοισιν ἦν ἰδεῖν,  
 πυρσῆς δὲ χαίτης καὶ παρ' ὀμμάτων σέλας  
 οἰνωπὸν ἐξέλαμπε περ[καί]νων γένυν; 15  
 οὐ μὴν δέμας γ' εὖρ[υθμον ν]υμφίου·  
 τοιῶνδε λέκτρω[ν οὔνεκ' εἰς ] πεδοστιβῇ  
 ῥινὸν καθισ .[ ]ται;  
 ἀλλ' οὐδὲ παίδων .[ ] πόσιν  
 θέσθαι. τί δῆτα τῇ[δ' ἐμαι]νόμην νόσῳ; 20  
 δαίμων ὁ τοῦδε κᾶμ' ἐ[νέπλησεν κα]κῶν,  
 μάλιστα δ' οὗτος οἰσε[ ]ων·

<sup>356</sup> I suggest here that Poseidon acts as Zeus' agent both in supplying Minos with his bull, and in the god's affliction on Pasiphae. Similarly, Reckford (1974:321) suggests that both Aphrodite (in *Hipp.*) and Poseidon (in *The Cretans*) act in unison, collaborating to each produce 'bulls from the sea' which wreak havoc on their victims, in different ways. I consider this idea further in Chapter 5 on the Cretans seas, and insularity.



ταῦρον γὰρ οὐκ ἔσφαξ[εν ὄνπερ ἡῦ]ξατο  
 ἐλθόντα θύσειν φάσμα [πο]ντίῳ [θε]ῷ.  
 ἐκ τῶνδ'ε τοί σ' ὑπῆλθε καὶ πετείσ[ατο] 25  
 δίκην Ποσειδῶν, ἐς δ' ἔμ' ἔσκηψ[εν νόσον].

Pasiphae:

Denials from me will no longer convince you; for the facts  
 are now quite clear. 5

If I had thrown myself at a man in love's furtive  
 commerce, I should rightly now be revealed as lascivious. As it  
 is, because my madness was a god's onslaught, I hurt, but  
 my trouble is not voluntary. Why, it has no probability! 10  
 What did I see in a bull to have my heart eaten away by a  
 most shaming affliction? Was it that it was handsome to the  
 eye in robes, and threw out a bright gleam from its ruddy  
 hair and eyes, the beard on its cheeks darkly red? Certainly 15  
 it wasn't the (lissom *or* well-formed?) body of a bride-  
 groom! Was it for a union like that ... of an animal's hide  
 ...? Nor (to get) children ... to make it my husband! Why  
 then was I (maddened) by this affliction? It was this man's 20  
 destiny that (brought) me too (my fill) of trouble, and  
 he especially ... since he did not slaughter (that) bull  
 (which) he vowed to sacrifice to the sea-god when it was  
 manifested. This is the reason, I tell you, why Poseidon  
 undermined you and exacted punishment, but launched (the  
 affliction) upon me. 25

This passage is part of an agon between Pasiphae and Minos, where the former addresses the Chorus of Elders as well as Minos. The queen has been found out by her husband as having mated with Poseidon's bull and given birth to the Minotaur in secret. In lines f472e.5-19, Pasiphae first admits her actions, then offers Minos an explanation as to why she (or indeed, any woman) in her right mind could not possibly have fallen in love with a bull, an animal. The queen proceeds to describe the bull and its attributes. In the rest of her speech, she suggests that she was the

victim of a 'god's onslaught'; she lays the blame for her condition firmly at Minos' feet: the result of failing to sacrifice his bull to Poseidon, as Minos promised to do.

In terms of Pasiphae's relationship with the animal, in other accounts of the myth, we find it is Pasiphae who is attracted to the bull and vice versa.<sup>357</sup> In this work, however, in lines 8-9, Pasiphae (like Phaedra in *Hippolytus*) attributes the cause of her unnatural passion to the 'god's onslaught'; she says that her 'trouble is not voluntary', implying that the god, not she, was the active agent in causing this relationship to come about. So, in this account Pasiphae can perhaps to be reflecting in more detail on how the 'god's onslaught' has affected her by causing her to be attracted to the bull as if it were a man. In the queen's revelations about what she might find attractive in a man (in lines 14-17), we notice a paradox. Those very attributes she cites, supposedly for a man, might ironically apply equally to an attractive bull, in her allusions to its coat ('handsome ... robes'), eyes ('bright gleam') and body ('well-formed'). It could be that, here, Euripides manipulates the character of Pasiphae who, despite her denials, uses ambiguous, allusive language- possible double entendres- which could apply equally to either a handsome man or animal. We note that her self-defence speech in lines 10-17 is very much open to interpretation through double entendres and the use of irony: it could ostensibly be read as referring to the qualities she finds attractive in a man (which she lists). Here,

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<sup>357</sup> An earlier Hesiodic version suggests the reverse: that it was the bull who was attracted to Pasiphae; 'the bull seeing Pasiphae, with its eyes, was seized by desire for her.' (See *Catalogue of Women*, 'Minos' Sons: Androgeos/Eurygyus, and the Minotaur' 93.14-17; trans. Most, Loeb, 2007: 164-7).

Euripides could be seen to be experimenting with the outcomes of human-animal transgressions through Pasiphae.

This appears to be one of the questions the poet is raising, in putting Pasiphae's relationship with Poseidon's bull under such intensive scrutiny. Euripides makes his characters, be they non-Athenian women or half-animals, appear more human – more like his audience than strange, distant non-Athenians. Having done so, the poet appears then to be deliberating upon the 'human *v.* animal' divide, by asking under what circumstances would a human be capable of falling in love with a non-human, here, a bull; what is it that really delineates one from the other?

Euripides is also perhaps problematizing this human/animal dynamic by contrasting certain generally-held views of heroes and animals. As we shall see in the context of Crete, heroes appear as cruel and unrestrained while animals do not always act as savage and violent.<sup>358</sup> Both Theseus and Minos, famous in their own right as heroes of Athens and Crete, respectively display inhumane qualities in venting their wrath and aggression on others such as Hippolytus and Pasiphae. Some interesting parallels can be observed between the characters of Minos and Theseus if we consider the agon between Theseus and Hippolytus in *Hippolytus* 902-1150 alongside

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<sup>358</sup> See Armstrong 2006: 86 who discusses this hero/monster dynamic in the context of 'the humanity of monsters' and 'the monstrosity of heroes'. In my view, we cannot go so far as Armstrong in demonising the 'heroes' as 'monsters' in Euripides' plays selected for study here, given the lack of evidence in the surviving texts. However, it is evident that the norms of behaviour of the two groups are generally turned on their heads in these works.

the scene quoted above as part of the agon between Minos and Pasiphae in *The Cretans* f472e 1-51: first, the Chorus in both works anticipate and respond to Minos' and Theseus' display of anger: in *The Cretans*, they exclaim 'Do not yield ...to anger...my lord.' (l.42) and again, after Minos has made his pronouncements on Pasiphae's future: 'My lord, hold back!' (l. 50). At *Hippolytus* 900-1, they similarly exclaim 'Abate your harsh anger, my lord Theseus...' There are also striking parallels in the extreme verdicts of both men on the 'crimes' of those they have chosen to judge: Pasiphae is sentenced to death in an underground prison (at *The Cretans* f386c 45-8) while Hippolytus is forever banished from his ancestral land (at *Hippolytus* 1048).

So, while the humans' aggressive and 'animal-like' natures appear to be highlighted in both works, the animals and non-humans including Zeus' and Poseidon's bulls, as well as the Minotaur, on the other hand, display human-like capacities of tenderness in their interactions with Europa and Pasiphae.<sup>359</sup> Perhaps the poet is problematizing audience expectations on the behaviour of humans and animals by upsetting certain stereotypes.

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<sup>359</sup> See e.g. the touching domestic scenes portrayed on urns, of Pasiphae nursing a docile (even cuddly) baby Minotaur (Frontisi-Ducroux 2003: 127); the way the 'human/animal qualities' are juxtaposed in *The Cretans* is generally familiar from the poet's portrayals staging 'barbarous Greeks' alongside 'decent barbarians' (e.g. *IT*, *Helen* etc.).

The gods' roles in inflicting humans with these unnatural tendencies of love for non-humans form a notion that is an important consideration in Euripides' 'Cretan plays'. Without doubt, the common versions of the stories of Pasiphae and Poseidon's bull that have been handed down through the ages have the queen developing an unnatural lust for the animal, incited by the madness inflicted upon her as revenge against Minos' failure to fulfil his promise to the god.<sup>360</sup> As we have seen above in *The Cretans* f472e, while Cypris/Aphrodite and Poseidon were involved in causing Pasiphae's madness, the instigator was Minos; however, Pasiphae became the victim. Euripides makes explicit reference to this chain of events several times in the play, for example, at f472e.6-11, where Pasiphae defends herself by arguing:

νῦν δ', ἐκ θεοῦ γὰρ προσβολῆς ἐμηνάμην,  
 ἀλγῶ μὲν, ἐστὶ δ' οὐχ ἑκο[ύσ]ιον κακόν.  
 ἔχει γὰρ οὐδεν εἰκός· ἐς τί γὰρ βοὸς  
 βλέψας' ἐδήχθην θυμὸν αἰσχίστη νόσῳ;

As it is, because my madness was a god's onslaught, I hurt, but my trouble is not voluntary. Why, it has no probability! What did I see in a bull to have my heart eaten away by a most shaming affliction?

In these lines, we find Pasiphae claiming that she bears no responsibility for the troubles (see also later at f472e.28: 'I ... was at fault in nothing'). She argues that the

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<sup>360</sup> Minos' intentions have not always appeared as honourable. For the suggestion that Minos acquired the throne of Crete by deceit, see, e.g., the later Apollodorus *The Library* 3.1.1-4.

troubles were beyond her power and control and attributes ‘the god’s onslaught’ as emanating from Cypris, or Aphrodite (at f472e.8). The queen herself professes that no-one in their right mind could have fallen in love with a bull, unless they were so directed by divine forces. She argues that, because she fell for the bull (not a human), she could not have been in her right mind.

We have now seen how both the gods Aphrodite and Poseidon have a role to play in Pasiphae’s affliction.<sup>361</sup> In this respect, there are parallels that can be noted between Pasiphae’s situation and that of her daughter, Phaedra, in *Hippolytus*. There too, Aphrodite avenged her wrath on Hippolytus by afflicting Phaedra with a madness of sexual passion for her stepson.<sup>362</sup> Also in *Hippolytus*, it was Poseidon whom Theseus invokes when seeking a god’s assistance in avenging his dead wife. The god obliges by sending his ‘bull from the sea’ to the Troezenian coast, which then destroys Hippolytus. Both mother (Pasiphae) and daughter (Phaedra) are afflicted with madness caused by Aphrodite, and in each case Poseidon is an active agent. It can also be noted that in both cases, Poseidon’s bull is involved.

As we saw previously in *The Cretans* f472e. 21-6, Pasiphae continues:

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<sup>361</sup> See also Bacchylides, fragment 26, P. Oxy. 2634 fr. 1 *Pasiphae*.1-4 where Cypris is being directly implicated in this passion of desire: φρα [Πασι[φ]ά[α] ἐν Κύπ[ρι]ς φύτευσε πόθον[ ‘...Pasiphae...(the Cyprian implanted) desire in her...’

<sup>362</sup> See Chapter 2, and e.g., *Hipp.* 27-8, 359-61, 372, 1400.

δαίμων ὁ τοῦδε κάμ' ἐ[νέπλησεν κα]κῶν,  
μάλιστα δ' οὔτος οἶσε[ ]ων·  
ταῦρον γὰρ οὐκ ἔσφαξ[εν ὄνπερ ἡῦ]ξατο  
ἐλθόντα θύσειν φάσμα [πο]ντίῳ [θε]ῶ.  
ἐκ τῶνδ' ἐτοί σ' ὑπῆλθε κα[ ]πετείσ[ατο  
δίκην Ποσειδῶν, ἐς δ' ἔμ' ἔσκηψ[εν νόσον.

Why then was I (maddened) by this affliction? It was this man's destiny that (brought) me too (my fill) of trouble, and he especially... since he did not slaughter (that) bull (which) he vowed to sacrifice to the sea-god when it was manifested. This is the reason, I tell you, why Poseidon undermined you and exacted punishment, but launched (the affliction) upon me.

In this passage, we can see Pasiphae outlining the course of events which resulted in her state of madness: Minos' destiny was the cause, given that he failed to sacrifice the bull to Poseidon. The result was that the god decided to take action against Minos by 'launching an affliction' on Pasiphae.

The chorus of Cretan Elders appear to respond sympathetically to Pasiphae's version of events (although the text is lacunose), when at *The Cretans* f472e.41-2, they suggest:

ΧΟΡΟΣ  
πολλοῖσι δῆλον [ὥς θεήλατον] κακὸν  
τόδ' ἐστίν· ὀργῇ[ ]ς, ἄναξ.

It is clear to many that this trouble (was launched by heaven. Do not yield . . . to) anger. . . my lord!

The Elders appear to concur that the 'trouble...launched by heaven' was the work of Poseidon and/or Cypris; they go further by suggesting that not only Pasiphae, but

others too, attribute the queen's woes to the gods ('it is clear to many'). So, it appears that they are on the side of Pasiphae and are won over by her version of events. If so, this also means that they appear to be in opposition to Minos, their great ruler to whom they sang their praises earlier at f472. Also, the Chorus appear to stress the complaint (that many of Euripides' characters voice): that the fault lies not with humans but with the gods when they seem to take Pasiphae's side in the debate that her actions were brought about by 'heaven' – and an Athenian audience (sensitive to the concerns of justice and fairness) would possibly have been sympathetic to that perspective.<sup>363</sup> If, indeed, the Chorus of Elders is sympathetic to Pasiphae's actions, they could also be seen, by implication, to be supportive of her insistence that her bestiality was involuntary (although accepting that allowing the resulting half-human monster to live would possibly have sat uneasily with the moral and social values of a fifth-century audience.)<sup>364</sup> The Chorus of Elders could equally be seen to be supportive of Pasiphae's daughter, Phaedra's unnatural sexual desires, and by extension, those of other Cretan women (such as Aerope in *Cretan Women*).

From Poseidon's bull to bulls associated with Crete: the spirit of the Cretan bull, an icon linked with the island and its mythical past, never seems to be far from the

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<sup>363</sup> It would appear that in the agon between Minos and Pasiphae at f472e, the Chorus is the third party, given its appearance at f472e.1-3 immediately before Pasiphae's speech at f472e.5ff and after it at f472e.42-3. It is therefore possible that they acted as the judge in the agon, whose decision Minos overturns at line 52. (This is given that the agon form demands a third party: see e.g. Barker 2009).

<sup>364</sup> In *The Cretans*, Pasiphae gives birth to the monster Minotaur who is allowed to survive.



‘Cretan plays’ (so too with Zeus, the god with whom the animal is strongly linked). Apollodorus’ later account tells us that the same bull that ferried Europa and Zeus across to Crete is also probably the one that Poseidon sent Minos.<sup>365</sup> Apollodorus also suggests that in terms of Heracles’ labours, this was the same Cretan bull that the hero vanquished on the island, as his seventh labour.<sup>366</sup> This repetitive iconography of bulls also appears central to Euripides’ construct of associations, allusions and cross-references within each plot interlinking the ‘Cretan plays’ by reinforcing themes involving bovine imagery. If *Hippolytus* and *The Cretans* are taken together, we begin to see some similarities between them in the treatment of bovine-related themes linked to Crete.

#### 4.5 Pasiphae’s cow

At *The Cretans* f472e.18 there occurs a reference by Pasiphae to the decoy cow, ‘(I put myself into) an animal’s hide’. In this section, I analyse the key elements of the stories featuring Pasiphae and Daedalus’ false cow and their plot to keep their plan (and its consequences) secret from Minos. The decoy cow was another important element in Euripides’ construct of Cretanism, an example of a larger-than-life invention fabricated, significantly, on Crete. This collaboration between the ancient world’s most famous architect and the Cretan queen results in the creation of a fantastical creature: an invention that is both false (a wooden cow) and material (a

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<sup>365</sup> The *Library* II. v. 7; trans. Frazer 1921: 198-9 and n. 2.

<sup>366</sup> See also Mills 1997: 23 and n. 90, on the claim that the Cretan and Marathonian bulls were the same beast.

live Pasiphae hidden within it). Other similar multiplicities abound: Pasiphae herself, hiding within the cow, could be construed (by the audience) to be the cow's 'womb'; yet, like the effect of a Russian doll, it is within the queen's womb, within the cow, that the Minotaur will be conceived. In this way, the wooden cow displays similar multiplicities in its nature that we have already seen in Zeus' and Poseidon's bull and will see again in the Minotaur.<sup>367</sup>

In relating the story of Pasiphae's collusion with Daedalus to deceive Minos, Euripides' version of the myth appears to be much darker than contemporary versions such as Bacchylides.<sup>368</sup> In the Euripidean version, Minos seems to be consumed with the effects of his wife's actions on him personally.<sup>369</sup> The mood is dark and sombre; we learn later at f472e.45 that Minos will sentence his own wife to death by imprisonment underground.<sup>370</sup> At f472, the chorus of Elders was summoned by Minos following the discovery of Pasiphae's plot. At 472b, the Elders appeal to Apollo for help. At f472e.1-2 they exclaim '... for I say no other woman dared this', indicating the seriousness of Pasiphae's actions. They appeal to Minos at least three times to show restraint in his judgement: at f472e.1-3, before Pasiphae's self-defence speech at lines 4-40, and again at f472e.41-2, after she has made known

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<sup>367</sup> That the cow is made of wood is significant in another way – it parallels Zeus' wooden temple discussed earlier, and is another thread binding common elements in Euripides' Cretanism.

<sup>368</sup> The different versions could, of course, be an effect of genre

<sup>369</sup> On the other hand, in Bacchylides Fragment 26, P. Oxy. 2634 fr. 1 *Pasiphae*, Minos is portrayed as a caring husband, concerned for the welfare of his wife.

<sup>370</sup> Minos' actions can be seen to echo the same game of concealing something unnatural (in this case, his wife's live body underground).

to those present her version of events, and finally at f472e.50-1, after Minos passes judgement on Pasiphae. Minos, however, is determined to exact the ultimate punishment – death (at f472e.45 he pronounces: ‘...seize this evil woman so she may get a fine death...’; and at f472e.52: ‘It is quite decided: no deferment of penalty’). So, in Euripides’ version, Pasiphae’s ‘crime’ warrants nothing short of a death sentence for her; yet, the emphasis seems to be on the effects on Minos of Pasiphae’s deception, rather than the ‘unnatural’ nature of the act: Pasiphae mating with an animal. This revelation about Minos’ own character was highlighted earlier when I considered the unheroic nature of protagonists pitted against the heroism of animals.

Continuing on the theme of Pasiphae’s cow, I now consider further the role of gods in her affliction. Apart from Poseidon, passage 472c of *The Cretans* offers the possibility that the goddess Aphrodite was also the cause of Pasiphae’s affliction:

Κρήτης ἀπα[  
φόβος τὰ θεῖ[α τοῖσι σώφροσιν βροτῶν  
πολλή γὰρ .[  
ἐμοὶ δ...[

...of Crete...The gods’ actions are a terror (to the wise among men?). For in her greatness ... but to me...<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Trans. Collard and Cropp 2008a: 545, who also suggest ‘Perhaps Aphrodite (whom this phrase describes at *Hippolytus* 443, *Iphigenia at Aulis* 557), if she aided Poseidon’s retribution by filling Pasiphae with desire for the bull.’ This is plausible, I suggest, given the ‘combined actions’ of the gods that I discuss earlier (see pp. 188-9).

Several elements suggest the possibility that it was Aphrodite who played an active role in Pasiphae's affliction: first, the use of the feminine πολλή in f472c.6 could suggest a reference to the goddess, given the lust it has incited in Pasiphae. Secondly, as Collard and Cropp propose, the reference to 'her greatness' is '[p]erhaps (to) Aphrodite (whom this phrase describes at *Hippolytus* 443 and *Iphegenia at Aulis* 557), if she aided Poseidon's retribution by filling Pasiphae with desire for the bull.'<sup>372</sup> And thirdly, we saw earlier from *The Cretans* f472e.7 that Pasiphae refers directly to Aphrodite as being the cause of her affliction. Given these references to the goddess, it is possible that it was Aphrodite who inspired Pasiphae to mastermind the idea of a decoy so that she could give full vent to her lust.<sup>373</sup> Although Pasiphae may have been responsible for mooted the grand plan (f472e.1), it was, in effect brought about by the agencies of Aphrodite (f472c) and Poseidon (f472e.24-5), who were both complicit in varying degrees. If we consider these three players together, a pattern of actions appears to be carried out by gods and humans as follows: we have seen that two gods – Cypris and Poseidon – are responsible for causing Pasiphae's madness.<sup>374</sup> Given that it was Poseidon's curse which unleashed itself against Minos, the sea-god's role appears central to the resulting destruction

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<sup>372</sup> Collard and Cropp 2008a: 545 n. 1

<sup>373</sup> It is interesting to note that in lines f472c.6-8, Pasiphae's sentiments echo those of Phaedra's, generally seen in *Hippolytus*: the concern with reputation, Cypris' involvement, and the description of their states as a 'nosos' etc.

<sup>374</sup> Later versions of the account, e.g. Apollodorus *The Library* III.1.4 appear to make no reference to Cypris' involvement in Pasiphae's madness which *The Cretans* f472e.7 and Bacchylides f26.4 refer to.

brought upon the House of Minos. Aphrodite plays a very precise role: to afflict Pasiphae with a very particular kind of sexual frenzy.<sup>375</sup>

Overall, the curse of Poseidon on Minos is linked with Aphrodite's affliction on Pasiphae. So, the roles of both gods are equally important for the curse to take its full effect. It would appear that each of the gods, Poseidon and Aphrodite, is significant in terms of Euripides' construct of Crete: the former is associated with the sea - his domain surrounds the island; the latter becomes the driving force inflicting Cretan women with bizarre sexual tendencies. With the gods acting together, we see the protagonists displaying extreme forms of behaviour, as a result of a formula involving the two gods and island of Crete.

So, in the same vein, paralleling the joint action of Poseidon-Aphrodite, we have on the level of mortals Pasiphae and Daedalus who together contrive to put the plan into action, the role of each being equally important in ensuring its success. The gods appear to collude in the same way as humans do; perhaps it is Crete that has the effect of encouraging collusion and secrecy in gods as well as humans, which, in turn, leashes misfortune on the protagonists on the island.

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<sup>375</sup> Again, paralleling the case of Phaedra in *Hipp.*; Aphrodite's cult title, the Cyprian, (i.e. non-Greek) perhaps alludes to such excesses of passion.

It is clear from Euripides f472e.1 that one of the aspects being emphasized is the significant act of daring undertaken by Pasiphae in wanting to mate with a bull using a decoy cow (we recall that the chorus exclaim at f472e.1 that no other woman has dared this).<sup>376</sup> This act of daring alludes to, possibly, two points that surface in relation to Euripides' Cretanism: first, the fact that she is a Cretan queen; and secondly, the plan itself is typically 'Cretan', it could be suggested. The wooden cow, conceived and put into action on the island is completely unique in folklore, a first, and never repeated in the same way (just as the Minotaur too is a first anywhere and iconic as part-animal, part-human). In Euripides' work, we learn in detail about the individuals who plan and create the decoy – its mastermind, Pasiphae, its designer, Daedalus, and the king, Minos, who caused it all to come about in the first place – all of whom come under the intense scrutiny of the poet. Here we see yet again how Crete provides the venue where acts of daring thrive – humans dare to fool nature, a decoy cow dares to entice a bull from lived experiences, bulls dare traverse seas and (as in the case of Daedalus and Icarus) humans dare to fly.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> Although it is ambiguous, of course, which act of Pasiphae's the Chorus are referring to exactly as being daring - possibly all of them, including giving birth to a half-human creature.

<sup>377</sup> See below on f472g of *The Cretans* and a reference in that passage to Icarus as 'bold', perhaps in daring to fly.

As mentioned earlier, the plan to fool nature was a joint design by a Cretan queen and the world's most famous architect: in *The Cretans* f472e.17-18 we saw allusions to the construction of the decoy cow:

τοιῶνδε λέκτρω[ν οὐνεκ' εἰς ] πεδοοστιβῆ  
ρίνδον καθισ .[ ]ται;

Collard and Cropp 2008a translate these lines as '[w]as it for a union like that...of an animal's hide ...?' Von Arnim proposes 'does this man (Minos) think I enclosed my body in', while Collard *et al.* render it as 'does he think I lowered my body...?'.<sup>378</sup>

This line is problematic not least because of its fragmentary nature and the lack of context. However, there is nevertheless some consensus that Euripides' lines make a direct reference to the artificial cow.<sup>379</sup> The detailed design of the decoy is traditionally attributed to Daedalus, the ancient world's most renowned architect; Euripides appears to follow this line.

Euripides' decoy cow is 'material': from *The Cretans* f472e.14-17, we learn that it walks the ground on all fours, as suggested by πεδοοστιβῆ in line 17.<sup>380</sup> It is also convincing enough to deceive nature - Poseidon's bull finds it attractive enough to

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<sup>378</sup> Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995:75 n. 17-18; the basis for the change by the later Collard and Cropp 2008a version is unclear.

<sup>379</sup> Most categorically from Collard and Cropp 2008a: 547 n. 1.

<sup>380</sup> Collard and Cropp 2008a: 547 n. 1: "'Animal' is literally '(animal) walking the ground, a clear allusion to Daedalus' artificial cow; 'walking' may imply that it moved.'"

be enticed into mounting it as if it were a real cow. On the evidence of f472e.17-18 above, it seems plausible that Daedalus covered his hollow wooden cow with ox-hide to make it more life-like to the bull. The architect then set it in the meadow to graze until it came to the bull's attention.<sup>381</sup>

Given the architect's crucial role in the story, we note that in *The Cretans*, two further pieces of fragmentary evidence offer insights into Daedalus' possible appearance in this work. The first is f472g, a scholion on Aristophanes *Frogs* 849 relating to this play which makes reference to Icarus:

ἐν γὰρ τοῖς Κρησὶν Ἰκάρου μονωδοῦντα ἐποίησεν (ὁ  
Εὐριπίδης)...θρασύτερον γὰρ δοκεῖ εἶναι τὸ πρόσωπον.

For (Euripides) has Icarus singing a monody in Cretans...his character seems to be rather bold.

Icarus, of course, was the famous son of an even more famous father, Daedalus. We know that both Icarus and Daedalus fled Athens when Daedalus escapes a murder charge for killing Talos, the latter's nephew (they were all Athenian).<sup>382</sup> In Crete, the architect constructs (or, depending on the version, helps to construct) not only the decoy cow but also the Labyrinth, as well as the wings he invents for himself and

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<sup>381</sup> See also Apollod. *The Library* III.I.4.

<sup>382</sup> Certainly, Daedalus' ancestry was commonly given as Athenian, and as son of Erechtheus (Plutarch *Theseus* 18; Pausanias vii.4-5; viii.53.3).



Icarus.<sup>383</sup> Secondly, the mention of Icarus' presence (from f472g) would imply Daedalus' presence too, given that Daedalus' decoy cow features in the play.<sup>384</sup>

We also find other possible references to Daedalus in *The Cretans* f988:

<MINOS>

τέκτων γὰρ ὢν ἔπρασσεσ οὐ ξυλουργικά.

<Minos>:

You are a builder but what you did was not carpentry.<sup>385</sup>

Armstrong also renders this cryptic line as, 'you are a carpenter, but what you practised is not woodwork'.<sup>386</sup> The line was (most plausibly) spoken by Minos, accusing Daedalus of using his skills to wrong ends by constructing the wooden cow. As a result, Minos had to endure the damage to his reputation that the architect's invention had brought: his wife's 'infidelity', the fact that she mated with a beast, and the fact that she has given birth to a monster and has been found out. Moreover, the king's wrath was possibly also directed at the architect's mastery at overcoming nature. Although both Daedalus and Minos were famous in their own right, and for different reasons, the architect – an Athenian – could be said to be even

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<sup>383</sup> The latter falls to his death when flying too close to the sun; the heat melted the wax on his artificial wings as both father and son were trying to flee Crete from Minos' pursuit. See Apollod. *The Library* III.I.4.

<sup>384</sup> The use of the word 'bold' could also suggest Icarus' defiance of Minos, or that Icarus was rash, given the fate that awaited him. See also Cantarella 1964: 117-8; Haft 1981: 241 n.102; it is unlikely that Icarus would have featured in *The Cretans* without Daedalus' presence.

<sup>385</sup> Collard and Cropp 2008a: 555 states that the lines are an allusion to Daedalus and the artificial cow; also, Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995: 78 n.988; from Plutarch, *Moralia* 812e.

<sup>386</sup> Armstrong 2006: 125.

more skilled than the king of Crete; here was the supreme commander of the Greek navy being cuckolded in his own court thanks to an employee. In f988 we could read an allusion to this collusion between Daedalus and Minos' wife – a deed hinted at by Minos when he tells Daedalus that 'what you did was not carpentry', as we saw earlier.<sup>387</sup> The price that Daedalus will pay for the subterfuge with the queen is high – like Pasiphae, he too will be condemned to death. However, we know that the architect has a cunning plan to evade his death sentence: to escape from Crete to Sicily with his son, Icarus, by inventing 'human wings'. A case could be made, therefore, for the presence of the Daedalus character in this play.

We also know from the myths that Minos commanded Daedalus to build the Labyrinth soon after the creature's birth, in order to house it.<sup>388</sup> So, an alternative interpretation of the reference at *The Cretans* f988 ('what you did was not carpentry') could be that the king is rebuking Daedalus for the latter's construction of the Labyrinth. For the architect, such a project provided both a risk and an opportunity: a dissatisfied Minos could easily order his employee's death. We know from certain versions of myth that Minos did order the architect's death, prompting Daedalus and Icarus to escape Crete.<sup>389</sup> However, the commission also provided the architect with an excellent opportunity to achieve everlasting fame and glory: his name was

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<sup>387</sup> Armstrong 2006:126 suggests that Minos accused Daedalus of 'pimping', or even of acting inappropriately, as her confidante.

<sup>388</sup> Daedalus is portrayed as an employee of the Cretan court.

<sup>389</sup> See Chapter 1, Appendix 1

eternally linked with the Labyrinth. This subterranean warren was, as Frontisi-Ducroux puts it, 'chimerical in design and construction as the hybrid itself that was to inhabit it.'<sup>390</sup> As in the case of Pasiphae's cow, the events unfolding in the House of Minos provided the skilled architect ample opportunity for innovation and fame, this time for the construction of a subterranean prison. The famed architect's role appears to be pivotal for the story.

If fragments f472g and f988 are taken together with f472e.17-18 (which, admittedly, is difficult to interpret) indicate a possibility that Daedalus himself had a significant role to play in *The Cretans*. As Frontisi-Ducroux suggests, Daedalus' inventive streak was very much driven by Pasiphae's passion, one dependent on the other.<sup>391</sup>

Pasiphae's cow was very much 'synthetic', not only in the sense of being artificial, but also in the sense of being a synthesis between illicit desire and invention. It could be that the architect, moved by the queen's desire, became interested in the experimental aspect of the challenge, resulting in a synthesis that was able to fool a real bull. Given this intimate relationship between Pasiphae and Daedalus, it is possible that Euripides may also be scrutinizing the role between a queen and an employee of the court - a relationship which might be telling the audience something about Crete the island as the place which allows for collusion and collaboration in unusual ways, in a setting that results in fantastical inventions.

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<sup>390</sup> Frontisi-Ducroux 2003: 127

<sup>391</sup> Frontisi-Ducroux 2003: 124

The inventions of Daedalus on Crete – the wooden cow, the Labyrinth, and the wings, are outlandish, fantastical, and very well-known. Judging by the fragments, it could be that the island is being represented as that place that provides the exact ambience needed for such inventions to flourish - where man can deceive nature successfully by his clever inventions. The wooden cow is a good example of a contraption unique to Crete. Such fantastical innovation on the island could be seen to be fuelled by extremes of emotion – passion, anger, fear, etc.<sup>392</sup> Part of such innovation is the result of a chain of inspiration set into action: desire and anger set in motion creation, which in turn fuels further desire and anger.<sup>393</sup>

On Crete, strong emotions can act as both inspiring as well as destructive forces. In this case, Thebes can possibly be brought in as a control to Crete. There are perhaps certain dynamics and configurations of destruction and of transgression associated with different tragic families and their locales; so, for example, where Thebes could be seen to be associated with intra-familial damage- incest and blood-kin killing- Crete, as a comparison, could be about sexual transgressions leading to familial breakdown.

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<sup>392</sup> i.e., for example, Pasiphae's sexual passion involves the invention of a false cow, Minos' wrath results in the construction of the labyrinth, and Daedalus' fear for his and Icarus' lives prompts him to devise human wings to flee Crete by.

<sup>393</sup> See Frontisi-Ducroux 2003: 130 based on the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD Zeugma mosaics from Gaziantep, Turkey, believed to depict a scene from *The Cretans* (<http://www.theoi.com/Gallery/Z45.8.html> [19/02/10]).

So far then, a range of characters have been considered in order to build up a sense of Crete as the place where anything is possible; the island appears to be represented as a place that provides the ambience for fantastical inventions -where man can deceive nature successfully. Displays of high passion and strong emotions could be seen to act in tandem with such innovations producing both inspiring acts and destructive forces. In the next section, we confront the monster himself, the Minotaur, whose physical appearance is part human and part animal; it is a conundrum in many ways– being neither one nor the other.

#### 4.6 The Minotaur

Having previously considered the representations of the bull and the cow in the ‘Cretan plays’, the final section of this chapter involves an analysis of the various references to the Minotaur in *The Cretans*. We know from accounts of the Cretan myths that Athens was freed forever from sending tribute to Minos as a result of the killing of the Minotaur by Theseus. The tale is one of the most recounted of Theseus’ heroic adventures.<sup>394</sup> The Minotaur is known not only by its ‘monster status’, but also as the very creature that Theseus vanquishes. Taken symbolically, Theseus’

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<sup>394</sup> See Mills 1997: 19 and n. 70; ‘Scenes of the Minotauromachy comprise the vast majority of the five percent of Athenian vase painting which portrays Theseus at this time, and reach a popularity around 540-530.’ Records show the existence of more than 300 paintings in black figure.

deed could be seen as the victory over dark, uncivilised forces by civilised, Athenian values.<sup>395</sup>

The origins of the name 'Minotaur' deserve a mention: it is noteworthy that the creature is not referred to by this epithet in any of the literary sources of the classical age.<sup>396</sup> Certainly, if the surviving fragments of his plays are enough to go by, Euripides does not refer to the creature by that name.<sup>397</sup> The title 'Minotaur', a compound of 'Minos' and 'tauros', 'the bull of Minos' was possibly a later Hellenistic term describing a creature who was part man, part bull and depicted as such as a popular image on Cretan coinage.<sup>398</sup>

*The Cretans* was certainly a well-known play in antiquity, both for the novelty in the treatment of its subject and for featuring the Minotaur as a personage in its own right. The striking feature of *The Cretans* is that the fragments are not only replete with references to the creature and to bovine-related vocabulary in general but also that the creature's half-man, half-bull nature is given a certain scrutiny. In

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<sup>395</sup> See Mills 1997:19.

<sup>396</sup> Although Minotaur-type statuettes (with a man's body and a bull's head) are found from the eighth century BC, the first time, the word 'Minotaur' appears anywhere in art is believed to be on the sixth-century Archikles/Glaukytes cup in Munich (Gantz 1993: 263 and 265 respectively); see also Ch5 'The Heidelberg Painter- Little Master-Cups-Amasis' in *The Development of the Attic Black Figure*, University of California Press E-Book Collection, 1982-2004 <http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft1f59n77b&chunk.id=d0e3111&toc.id=&brand=ucpress> [18/01/14].

<sup>397</sup> However, I accept that not enough fragmentary evidence survives to draw firm conclusions on this.

<sup>398</sup> The creature is typically depicted on the obverse with the Labyrinth on the reverse, on coins from Knossos, Crete, for example (see Seltman 1955:171 and pl. XXXVII, 5 depicting the Minotaur and the Labyrinth on coinage 'in the fifth century'; also, Kraay 1976: 52, pl. 8, 150 -1, similarly depicting the Minotaur and the Labyrinth on coinage from c.425-360BC). It is noteworthy that the Minotaur was chosen as an icon of the island by Cretans themselves in deciding upon an image for their coins.

particular, the poet appears to be contemplating what differentiates man and beast, in presenting a creature who is neither one nor the other. The poet uses the nature of man to pose difficult questions, forcing the spectator to consider elements of the beast in man, as well as its corollary, the human aspects of an animal.<sup>399</sup> Couched within the paradigm of the self and otherness, human-animal polarities were played out in defining one entity against another in terms of fifth-century structures of thought. An example of such a dynamic can be seen in the saying of either Thales or Socrates (the attribution is unclear) in counting himself fortunate:

πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι ἄνθρωπος ἐγενόμην καὶ οὐ θηρίον, εἴ τα ὅτι ἀνὴρ καὶ οὐ γυνή, τρίτον Ἑλλήν καὶ οὐ βάρβαρος. (D.L.1.33)

First because I was born a man and not a beast, second a man and not a woman, third Greek and not barbarian.<sup>400</sup>

The importance attributed to this human-animal divide is apparent from the words by Socrates (or Thales).<sup>401</sup> In general terms, the idea of the self *v.* the other in human/animal terms, has been much discussed, especially in current scholarship<sup>402</sup>

What I propose in the context of Euripides' Crete and the Minotaur, however, is a different perspective on this opposition by analogy. The ancient Greeks themselves

<sup>399</sup> See e.g. Dubois 1991 for an interesting discussion on the notion of hierarchy including male/female, Greek/barbarian and human/animal. Dubois defines 'the norm' in terms of 'a catalogue of difference'.

<sup>400</sup> Trans. Katz 1998 ; <http://mkatz.web.wesleyan.edu/Images2/cciv243.CIHAGPanels.html> [02/02/14].

<sup>401</sup> It is equally interesting to speculate on the idea that if the saying is attributable to Thales, this early, influential pre-Socratic philosopher, notable for attempting to explain natural phenomena *without* reference to mythology, might have been provided Euripides with the notion of *using* mythology to further examine the whole question of the human-animal divide.

<sup>402</sup> See e.g. Lloyd 1966, Hall 1991, Cartledge 2002; the dichotomies have also since been variously challenged and deconstructed (see e.g. Segal 2005).

hardly agreed on what differentiated humans from animals; so, instead of treating the two domains of human and non-humans as polar opposites,<sup>403</sup> it is plausible that in the 'Cretan plays', Euripides' perspective was to scrutinize and investigate the whole idea of what it is to be human in the first place; to be self-reflexive on 'the plasticity of the human imagination, the range of human creativity' that explore 'the imaginative possibilities' of human-ness.<sup>404</sup> As we have seen from this chapter, the divide is often not altogether clear cut, and so nothing in the constitution of the concept of human-ness can ever be taken for granted.<sup>405</sup>

The Minotaur, half-man, half-bull comes to represent a kind of mix of 'two extremes of being', a creature which is neither one nor the other, nor both. In this sense, the Minotaur is truly 'half-way', or marginal, as we shall see. At least two of Euripides' works, *The Cretans* and *Theseus*, specifically feature the Minotaur. Together with other bovine imagery, the cow and the bull, the Minotaur appears in its various guises to be inextricably linked with the island and its mythologies in a number of ways. The Minotaur's link with Crete is also outstanding in one respect: unlike most of the other Cretan personages from myth - Europa, Minos, Sarpedon, Rhadamanthys and Phaedra - who are also associated with other parts of the Greek

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<sup>403</sup> See Lloyd 2012: 12 'The Greeks (...) did not all agree on the subject - they hardly ever did.'

<sup>404</sup> See Lloyd 2012: 29-30; and generally for different ways of thinking about the human-beast dynamic.

<sup>405</sup> As Lloyd 2012:1 suggests in considering the world and the relationship of human beings to it in ancient Greek and Chinese cultures: 'Being is not a given (however tempting it may be to assume it is) but a problem, and so too is humanity, that is, what counts as being human and on what grounds, and with what implications for how we should behave.'



(and non-Greek) world, the Minotaur's appearance in literary sources is confined to the island alone. The creature is born and bred on Crete. (It also never leaves the island, meeting its end there.) This unique Cretan identity is perhaps another reason why Euripides deploys it with frequency in at least two works, as if to emphasize its Cretan-ness.<sup>406</sup>

According to the popular versions of the myths, the Minotaur's notoriety is partly attributed to the creature's demand (and appetite) for Athenian youths and maidens as tribute.<sup>407</sup> It is noteworthy that it required an Athenian hero no less than Theseus to sail to Crete to vanquish the creature and put an end to the long-standing obligations of sending human tribute; in so doing, Theseus achieved possibly his greatest victory.<sup>408</sup> However, the feat turns out to be a dark victory, as the flaws in Theseus' own character are exposed, for example, in his subsequent abandonment of Ariadne on Dia (or Naxos) while fleeing Crete. So, given the complexity of the story and its possible interpretations, Euripides' portrayals of the bizarre Minotaur, and the characters associated with its story, are never clear cut, but are nuanced and highly problematized. Such complexity of subject matter provides the poet with rich material for innovation and experimentation, as seen in *The Cretans*.

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<sup>406</sup> For this and other reasons, I will also consider the creature further in my chapter on Cretanism and insularity (Chapter 5) where I suggest that distant islands such as Crete (far removed from the 'civilized' world of Athens), provide the dramatist with a perfect setting to experiment with the bizarre, both in physical and moral terms. (See Constantakopoulou 2007: 5 for islands as places for experimentation).

<sup>407</sup> See e.g. the later, Apollodorus' version (*The Library*).

<sup>408</sup> Mills 1997: 13

Given the significant role of the Minotaur in *The Cretans*, it is not surprising that detailed descriptions occur in the work in as many as three of the surviving passages (f472a, f472b and f1004). Of the three passages, the most explicit descriptions of the creature occur in the first two, which I now analyse together:

f472a:

σύμμικτον εἶδος κάποφώλιον βρέφος  
 ...an infant of mixed appearance, born to sterility...

f472b.29-41:

<ΤΡΟΦΟΣ>	
ταύρου μέμεικται καὶ βροτοῦ διπλῇ φύσει.	
<ΜΙΝΩΣ>	
ἥκ]ουσα καὶ πρίν·πῶς δ' ο[	30
<ΤΡΟΦΟΣ>	
στέ[ρνοις ἔφεδρον κρᾶτα τ[αύρειον φέρει.	
<ΜΙΝΩΣ>	
τετρ]ασκελῆς γὰρ ἦ δίβαμ[ος ἔρχεται;	
<ΤΡΟΦΟΣ>	
δίπ]ους [μ]ελαίνῃ δασκ[	
<ΜΙΝΩΣ>	
ἦ κ]αί τι πρὸς τοῖσδ' ἄλλο [	
<ΤΡΟΦΟΣ>	
μύ]ωπος οἴστρου κέρκον [	35
<ΜΙΝΩΣ>	
]υ γῆρυν [	
<ΤΡΟΦΟΣ>	
] φορβάδος [	
<ΜΙΝΩΣ>	
μ]αστ[ὸς ] δὲ μ[η]τρὸς ἦ βοὸς .[	
<ΤΡΟΦΟΣ>	
τρ]έφ[ου]σιν οἱ τεκόντες ου.[	
τοῖς τεκο[ῦσι	41

<Nurse>:  
 It is mixed, with a twofold nature, of bull and human.  
 <Minos>:  
 I have (heard) that before too; but how...?  
 <Nurse>:  
 (It bears a bull's?) head set above its breast.  
 <Minos>:  
 So (does it go) on four legs or walk on two?  
 <Nurse>:  
 On (two)...dark with black...  
 <Minos>:  
 And is there anything further...?  
 <Nurse>:  
 ...a tail... (against?) the maddening cattle-fly.  
 <Minos>:  
 ...voice...  
 <Nurse>:  
 ...grazing...  
 <Minos>:  
 ...a mother's breast, or a cow's...?  
 <Nurse>:  
 Its parent feeds it...

Three specific features about the creature become immediately apparent from f472a-b (in which occur possibly the first ever references to the creature in any of Euripides' works):<sup>409</sup> it is an infant, it has a 'mixed appearance' of man and bull, and that it is sterile, incapable of reproducing as either man or beast.

Collard and Cropp offer the word at f472a, as ἀποφώλιον which suggests 'born to sterility'.<sup>410</sup> So, in Euripides' version, the Minotaur's uniqueness as a creature that is

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<sup>409</sup> Here, I follow the chronology for the 'Cretan plays' as suggested by Collard and Cropp 2008a: *The Cretans* c.438-5 BC, *Theseus* before 422 BC, *Hippolytus Kaluptomenos* before 428BC. Although allusions to the Minotaur possibly occur (to a greater or lesser degree) in all three plays, its first appearance is however, in *The Cretans*, following this chronology.

<sup>410</sup> Collard and Cropp 2008a: 541, n. on 472a.

sterile appears to be emphasized. The creature is a mix, comprising features of both man and bull, but not belonging wholly to either category. Although Euripides draws attention to the Minotaur's strangeness in terms of its sterility and looks, the poet does not appear, however, to give it too harsh a treatment in this work, given the history of its vicious treatment of Athenian youth in myth. Its 'positive' treatment (which represents a choice in itself by Euripides) could in part be because the creature appears in this work as an infant, as yet incapable of any violence and fury it will display in *Theseus*. It is also yet to be incarcerated in the Labyrinth<sup>411</sup> - where, deprived of contact of any kind, as well as food and light, it will work up a fury when much later, as an adult, Theseus encounters it.<sup>412</sup>

Another element that is stressed in *The Cretans* f472b.29 is the Minotaur's 'multiple nature':

ταύρου μέμεικται καὶ βροτοῦ διπλῇ φύσει.

It is mixed, with a twofold nature, of bull and human.

Here is a creature from Crete that is rare in literature; it bears the characteristics of both human and animal, but is neither one, nor the other.<sup>413</sup> It belongs to its own,

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<sup>411</sup> By popular accounts, Minos commands Daedalus to build the Labyrinth as a prison for the creature. (Apollod. *The Library* 1.4)

<sup>412</sup> See *Theseus* f328b, discussed later.

<sup>413</sup> Similar to the Centaurs, half-horse, half-humans. In one version, they were the product of Ixion's son, Centaurus, copulating with the Magnesian mares on the slopes of Mt. Peleion (Thessaly).

unique, marginal sphere, between two classifications of life forms. Its appearance is described later at f472b.31-33. There, we learn that the Minotaur has the head and the tail of a bull, but the body of a man, and like man, is two-legged.<sup>414</sup> The term διπλῇ φύσει, ‘twofold nature’, is itself ambiguous, given the myriad of meanings that the word φύσις possesses.<sup>415</sup> These include referring to its life-breath, or its blood, or physical, or indeed, emotional nature that is mixed. F472a-b offer all these possibilities. A striking feature of line 29 is that in the very first description of the creature, the emphasis appears to be on its ‘nature’ (its looks are described later at 31-3). This emphasis on its emotional/noetic characteristics is significant in Euripides’ version: it is portrayed as being more in the ‘human’ rather than the ‘animal’ category. This is less surprising perhaps if we consider that it has famous human parentage through its mother, Pasiphae, its putative (step)father, Minos (as her husband), and even a god – Zeus – as its putative grandfather. So, it would appear that not only is the Minotaur part-human, it is also part-god, a feature which appears to emphasise yet again, the close triadic connections between the three realms of gods-human-animal.

Although the fragmentary nature of the passage renders it difficult to discern with certainty, the creature might even have been able to speak: from line f472b.36,

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<sup>414</sup> The references to its tail at *The Cretans* f472b.36 and f472e.35a appear to correspond to a similar reference in *Theseus* f386b.6 (see p. 146).

<sup>415</sup> See e.g. Neddaf 1992 on *phusis*

γῆρυν, it has a ‘...voice...’<sup>416</sup> or ‘speech’ like a human, or can bellow, like a bull.

From f472b.37 we learn that its natural tendency is to graze like a bull or cow.

However, like a human baby, it is breast-fed by its mother, Pasiphae, and not suckled by a cow, as a calf would be. In this sense, it is more human than animal.

We see in lines f472b.38-9:

<MINΩΣ>

μ]αστ[ὸς ] δὲ μ[η]τρὸς ἣ βοὸς .[

<ΤΡΟΦΟΣ>

τρ]έφ[ου]σιν οἱ τεκόντες ου.[

<Minos>:

...a mother’s breast, or a cow’s...?

<Nurse>:

Its parent feeds it...

The exact nature of the infant Minotaur’s diet is left ambiguous: it either feeds on mother’s milk (from f472b.38-9), or on grass as its father does (from f472b.37).

However, line f472b.38-9 could equally suggest that Pasiphae fed the baby Minotaur human food. Being fed on (a human) mother’s milk or being given human food might make it appear more human. Lloyd (2012:12) makes the interesting observation that ‘[b]easts did not eat bread or cooked food’;<sup>417</sup> so if the baby Minotaur is being fed on cooked food, it is possibly considered more as a human than animal. Ultimately, however, it is impossible from these fragmentary lines to work out the exact nature of the Minotaur’s diet with certainty. Here, I would propose further that the make-up of the Minotaur was left deliberately ambiguous –

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<sup>416</sup> Although noting that none of the surviving passages attribute it with a speaking part.

<sup>417</sup> See also Vernant 1980: 135 similarly discussing the “‘raw’ state” of animal diet.

possibly animal, possibly human but also possibly an 'in-between' with aspects of both but strictly belonging to neither category. As I discuss later in this chapter, the Minotaur grows to adulthood and behaves equally ambiguously in its later encounter with Theseus in the fragmentary work, *Theseus*.

We have gleaned from these two passages so far some of the physical characteristics and nature of this infant creature: it is sterile; it bears the head and tail of a bull and the body of a human; its appetite is perhaps more human than animal, as is its character. The baby Minotaur so far displays multiple identities that incorporates both physical and emotional aspects - it bears the looks and nature of both human and animal. Earlier in this section, I noted from my analysis of Zeus' bull (also evident in *The Cretans*) that its striking characteristic was also its multiple identities – its changeable appearance and nature. I suggest in the same way that the young Minotaur in Euripides, too, displays the same multiple identities in its mixed appearance and nature. This is another characteristic of Euripides' construct of Cretanism - implicit in both the bovine and humans are aspects of multiple identities, often bearing either physical or emotional traits of both animal and human in each. Here again in the case of the Minotaur, as we saw earlier in the case of Poseidon's bull, the poet is problematizing the bull's multiple nature. Euripides' infant Minotaur is part-human, part-bovine in all senses – there is no suggestion that the creature is a cannibal, a feature which makes it potentially harmless to the humans in its vicinity. This nuanced view of the creature avoids ascribing any

incongruous anthropophagic traits to the creature; instead, its descriptions throw into sharp perspective its own 'human' qualities when compared to the monstrous behaviour of the humans it will encounter.

It would appear, then, that Euripides' Crete features creatures as well as human protagonists who embody physical and emotional aspects of both human and animal in each. Minos, Pasiphae and Daedalus' inventions as well as the Minotaur itself variously display these aspects. The hybrid Minotaur is ostensibly a monster; we know from epic, for example, that monsters such as the one-eyed Polyphemus are capable of great fury and destruction. Yet in *The Cretans*, the Minotaur appears as quite the reverse - placid and docile. However, as we will find, contained within it are the possibilities of both extremes of temperament.<sup>418</sup> So, it is less surprising to find the other extreme aspect of the Minotaur's nature, the creature as a true ogre, surfacing in another of Euripides' fragments, *Theseus*, considered next.

In *Theseus* the creature is depicted as being full of rage and fury, in complete contrast to the docile infant in *The Cretans*. It is possible that Euripides' Minotaur appeared benign at birth but was represented as a monster on reaching adulthood for possibly

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<sup>418</sup> In emphasizing Euripides' depictions of a 'human-like' Minotaur, I suggest an interpretation of the nature of the Minotaur in line with Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* as applied to humans (but not to animals). See esp. Aristotle's deliberations on the characteristics of the extreme and mean states in Book II.8, and on perceptions and judgement in II.9. Also see Aston 2011:18 and notes 27-8. That Euripides was a source for Aristotle is not in doubt (Eur. *Alcmaeon*, *Philoctetes*, and *Orestes* are among the works referred to by the philosopher). It is plausible that Aristotle would have known Euripides' *The Cretans* and the depictions of the Minotaur in it.



two very different reasons, and specifically in its interactions with Minos and with Theseus. In its encounter with each, the creature displays a capacity for both heroic and monstrous acts. Euripides' Cretanism encompasses both these interactions over two plays: *The Cretans*, (as we have seen), and in *Theseus* (as we will see).

#### 4.6.1 The Minotaur and Minos

Early literature makes reference to the killing of Androgeos, Minos' son, by Athenians as the act that set in motion Minos' demand for tributes.<sup>419</sup> We also know that Minos punished the Athenians by forcing them to send to the Minotaur seven youths and seven maidens as a tribute every seventh year, or even annually, according to some versions.<sup>420</sup> In Euripides' *The Cretans*, an oblique reference to the tributes appears in Pasiphae's speech in the agon at f472e.35-40:

ἐπίστασαι δέ τοι  
μιαιφόν' ἔργα καὶ σφαγὰς ἀνδροκτόνους·  
εἴτ' ὠμοσίτου τῆς ἐμῆς ἐρᾶς φαγεῖν  
σαρκός, πάρεστι· μὴ ἄλλιπης θοινώμενος.  
ἐλεύθεροι γὰρ κούδ' ἐν ἡδικηκότεσσι  
τῆς σῆς ἑκατὶ ζημ[ία]ς ὀλούμεθα.

40

So, either if you have decided to kill me by drowning,  
go on and kill me-indeed you understand acts of foul  
murder and the slaughtering of men!-or, if you desire to  
eat my flesh raw, here it is: don't go short on your banquet!

<sup>419</sup> See the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* f93.

<sup>420</sup> This idea of sending the youths and maidens to the Minotaur at regular periods seems like a later development (e.g. Plutarch and Ovid- every 9<sup>th</sup> year; Servius on *Aeneid* 6.14 – annually).

The suggestion of cannibalism and bloodthirstiness in these lines could be an allusion to the Athenian tribute fed to the Minotaur.<sup>421</sup> Pasiphae's reference to this demand in lines 35-40 can be seen as an expression of her condemnation of it, formulated ironically in terms of Minos killing her in the same way. So, in Euripides' play, these allusions to the horrors attributable to the Minotaur from earlier sources are brought into question by its own mother: Pasiphae could be suggesting that it is Minos, not the creature, who is responsible for these acts of terror.

Given the nature of Euripides' Cretan fragments, it is difficult to ascertain with any certainty the exact story-lines that the poet might have had in mind for the eventual fate of the Minotaur in *The Cretans*. Based on the earlier, Hesiodic versions it would appear that the Minotaur's life was spared purely as part of Minos' own self-interests. Previous scholars have even suggested that Minos (and Theseus) made political capital out of the Minotaur.<sup>422</sup> Athenian youths and unmarried girls were forcefully brought to the Labyrinth on at least two pretexts; first, that Minos gave the Athenians the impression that the Minotaur was an anthropophagite, a flesh-devouring ogre, in order to drive fear into their hearts, and as a means of continuing to perpetuate the tribute, as part of a show of his own power over Athens. Secondly,

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<sup>421</sup> See Collard, Cropp and Lee 1995: 77 n. 37-9; also, Collard and Cropp 2008a: 420-425 on f385, 386 and 386 a-c.

<sup>422</sup> E.g. see Armstrong 2006: 90-2.

literary evidence points to Minos' enslavement in the Labyrinth of unmarried girls and youths sent as tribute.<sup>423</sup> As we saw earlier, it was the killing of Androgeos by Athenians that drove Minos to enforce the tribute on Athens. However, this 'long-drawn-out atonement for the death of his son...' comes to be more an expression of his great power over his own and neighbouring states than an expression of grief.<sup>424</sup> I suggest that Minos' need for power was the idea behind Pasiphae's accusation at f472e.36-7 of 'murder, slaughtering of men'. (In any case, it is unlikely that the Minotaur's own mother would be accusing Minos of killing men to provide fodder for her infant!)

So, a case could be made for presenting the Euripidean Minos as a self-centered, ambitious king who used the Minotaur for his own political gains.<sup>425</sup> We have seen within this dynamic that the Minotaur was key to the success of Minos' plans. We also know from myth that this powerful king would come to his downfall eventually. It would take Theseus, the great (if not greatest) Athenian hero, to topple the Cretan ruler. In the next section, I consider the possibility that the Minotaur and Minos came to represent Crete, while Theseus could be seen to

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<sup>423</sup> The cases of the unmarried girls include Scylla, although there the attraction was mutual (Armstrong 2006: 117-8). Many of the women eventually die; also, Eriboia was one of the 'young maidens' in the past pursued by Minos (Gantz 1993: 263).

<sup>424</sup> Armstrong 2006: 92.

<sup>425</sup> This Euripidean view can be seen to conform to Plato's version of Minos and his treatment by the tragedians, e.g. 'and because of this (i.e. tragedy as a poetic genre) we stretch Minos on the rack to avenge ourselves against him for those he forced us to pay tribute. In this Minos erred, incurring our hatred, by which he came to the bad reputation you asked about. Plato *Minos*: 321a (trans. Lewis V.B., Catholic University of America, 13/10/2006; <http://faculty.cua.edu/lewisb/MinosTransl.pdf> [30/05/14]) (my parenthesis).

represent Athens, the focus being the dynamics between each set of protagonists. I suggest that in his construct of Cretanism, Euripides specifically pits Minos and Theseus against each other only to show up the similarities in the make-up of their characters as 'monstrous heroes'. I consider how, ironically, it was Minotaur, albeit in a different guise (now an adult) that was the vehicle by which Theseus achieves his high status as Athenian hero *par excellence*.

### 4.6.2 The Minotaur and Theseus

In another of Euripides' fragmentary works set on Crete, *Theseus*, the Minotaur is depicted in a completely different light from what we have encountered so far. In this play, we meet the creature at a crucial moment of the combat between the Minotaur and Theseus.<sup>426</sup> At f386b.1-12 we find a vivid description of the Messenger's account of the fateful encounter between the Athenian hero and the Cretan monster:

<ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ>

]θε κιώνω[ν  
 ]. ατ' εἶχον [  
 ]ακρον καὶ δα[  
 ]ων θεατῆς ἀσφ[αλ-  
 Λεύσσω] δὲ τὸν μὲν βο[υ-  
 ν]τα κυρτόν, εἰς κ[έρας θυμούμενον,  
 ]ι διαψαίροντα.[  
 ]τι θαρσοῦντ(α).[

<sup>426</sup> This is part of the Messenger's speech; he appears to be recounting his experiences first hand. The exact location of the combat is however, unclear. Traditionally, the Labyrinth is said to be where the encounter between Theseus and the Minotaur took place. If Euripides is following this version, then the Messenger could also have witnessed the combat within it.

10

ν]τα μηρῶν εντοσ[  
 ό δ' Αἰγέ]ως μὲν τῷ λόγῳ [κελκημένος,  
 ἔργῳ] δὲ Θησεὺς [ἐ]κ Ποσει[ιδῶνος γεγώς  
 ]ματ' ἐκδὺς θηρὸς [  
 κο]ρύνῃ δεξιὰν ὠ[πιλισμένος

<Messenger>:

... (before *or* behind?) the pillars...I had...  
 (top-most *or* distant) and...a spectator...(taking a safe position?).  
 And (I caught sight of) the (bull, bull-formed, bull-horned?)...curved,  
 (tossing his horns in anger), sweeping  
 (with his tail?)... ...full of courage...of his thighs...  
 (But) Theseus (who is called the son of Aegeus) in name,  
 but (in reality is sprung from) Poseidon, threw off (his garments and  
 approached?) the beast, (armed) with his...  
 club in his right hand...

Admittedly, the fragment f386b is damaged and lacunose; however, a few possible  
 observations can be safely made. The phrase 'bull-horned' at line 4-5 is presumably  
 a reference to the Minotaur; its mood here is one of extreme anger. This is possibly  
 the first piece of surviving literary evidence of the period that describes the  
 encounter between the Cretan monster and the Athenian Theseus (and does so in  
 graphic detail). In this ultimate duel, we see the wrath of the Minotaur being  
 justifiably evoked, as this is a fight for its survival against a hero who has travelled  
 across the seas from Athens with one sole motive: to kill it.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> As far as I am aware, there are no other earlier, surviving literary sources depicting this combat; there is of course, much evidence from vase paintings of the period depicting this scene.

The Minotaur's strength and courage are specifically alluded to at f386b.5-6.<sup>428</sup> Here, we also learn of another quality, its courage.<sup>429</sup> While accepting the lacunose nature of the fragment, I nevertheless suggest that θαρσοῦντ(α) in line 8 refers to the Minotaur and not Theseus; these descriptions are part of the first 6 lines of f386b in connection with the former. The latter is not introduced into the passage until later in line 7 with the epithet Theseus...son of Aegeus. Going by this reading, the attributes of strength and courage are generally highly admirable in any fighter; here, the poet appears to endow not Theseus, but the Minotaur with these human, even super-human, qualities. By contrast, Theseus' acumen and skills as a warrior are played up: he has his club, κοῖρυνῆ (at f386b.12-13) – an instrument for killing wild beasts. There is, of course, the possibility of bias in the reporting given that the Messenger could be from the Cretan court (it is hard to tell, as this is the only reference to a messenger in the whole of the fragmentary play). Nevertheless, the passage is important in that it portrays this crucial encounter which was to leave the Minotaur dead; Theseus will go on to become a great hero in the eyes of the Athenians for having slain the monster from Crete and freed Athens from the yoke of human tribute forever. Also implicit is the notion that, at last, the greatest civilizing force of the fifth-century, Athens, had finally brought Crete within its

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<sup>428</sup> See also the Hesiodic account in f96.15-16 for a description of the Minotaur's legendary strength: 'she, becoming pregnant, bore to Minos [a strong son, ... a wonder [to see.]]'.

<sup>429</sup> For the importance of courage as an attribute, see e.g. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II.6.1107a.22-3 on temperance and courage in deliberations on excess, deficiency and the mean.

sphere of influence through this victory, paralleling Theseus' victory over Minos. In any case, as stated previously, the killing of the Minotaur remained one of Theseus' most noted feats.<sup>430</sup>

We note so far that the Minotaur in *Theseus* does display a more ferocious nature when compared to its more docile appearance in f472e of *The Cretans*. Even so, it is not described as savage, merely responding with strength and fury to its opponent in combat. The qualities by which the poet describes it, strength and courage, generally represent highly regarded human attributes. The fact that the Minotaur is a 'fitting adversary' to Theseus is no doubt significant.<sup>431</sup> By attributing such qualities to a half-human, Euripides yet again appears to be highlighting the creature's almost human, heroic qualities.

Given the way the Cretan king and Athenian hero might have both made political capital out of their domination over the Minotaur, we find ourselves pondering more on the striking similarities (more than the differences) between Minos and Theseus, who are, after all, sworn enemies. In another fragment from Eur. *Theseus* f386c, we see the two protagonists in a part of a scene where the two characters are in combat with one another).<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Mills 1997:13: 'no other Athenian hero faced and surmounted as great a challenge as the Minotaur'; also at *ibid.* p.21.

<sup>431</sup> For 'fitting adversaries', cf. the portrayal of the Persians in Aeschylus *Persians*.

<sup>432</sup> The words could be spoken by either Minos or Theseus. Here, Euripides is possibly again suggesting multiple identity in another aspect: heroes should be regarded with caution, for within them

<ΘΗΣΕΥΣ ἢ ΜΙΝΩΣ>

κάρα τε γάρ σου συγχέω κόμαις ὁμοῦ  
ῥαναί τε δ' ἐγκέφαλον· ὀμμάτων δ' ἄπο  
αἵμοσταγεῖς πρηστήρες οἷσονται κάτω.

<THESEUS or MINOS>

I will crush your head together with your hair, and...  
pour...your brain; and jets of blood will be carried  
down from your eyes.

It would appear that such abrasive language is unlike anything ever uttered by Theseus anywhere else. While there is some evidence to suggest that the words were spoken by Theseus to Minos, it could equally have been the other way around<sup>433</sup> Accepting its fragmentary nature, perhaps the most interesting feature about this speech is its inherent ambiguity – either protagonist could have spoken the words, showing up – again - the parallels between Minos and Theseus in their characters in terms of their monstrous savagery.

When we take the two works, *The Cretans* and *Theseus*, together, Euripides appears to be turning the spotlight on these similarities between the Cretan Minos and the Athenian Theseus by pitting them against one another. This aspect of Cretanism which alludes to the Cretan-ness of Athenians and the Athenian-ness of Cretans is one that is another common thread running through the 'Cretan plays'.

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lurks the monster of ambition. It also points to how heroes need monsters in order to achieve their own aims.

<sup>433</sup> See Mills 1997:253



Having considered the relationship of the Minotaur with Minos and Theseus across two works, I now consider the significance of that other icon associated with the Minotaur-the Labyrinth.

#### 4.6.3 The Labyrinth

We know from certain versions of myth that Minos commanded Daedalus to build a Labyrinth within which the Minotaur was to be imprisoned.<sup>434</sup> However, we also need to question the need for Minos to command Daedalus to construct such a complex prison as the Labyrinth for the Minotaur. Why was the creature not just imprisoned and killed given that this was the fate that met his mother (at f472e.45)? We learn from Apollodorus that Minos was acting in compliance with ‘certain oracles’ which required him to imprison and guard the Minotaur in a Labyrinth;<sup>435</sup> yet we also know from the same later source that, despite the oracles’ advice, Minos failed to fulfil a previous promise to Poseidon, a god undoubtedly important to Minos given the king’s traditional role as commander of the seas. So, whether we can be convinced that Minos felt the need to obey these oracles when he failed to perform sacrifice previously, remains debatable. Perhaps, as I suggested earlier, a plausible reason as to why Minos kept the creature alive was in order to use it to further his own political ambitions.

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<sup>434</sup> As detailed in Chapter 1, Appendix 1

<sup>435</sup> Apollod. *The Library* III.1.4. This later version was possibly a variant of the myth (see Chapter 1, sect. 1.5 for myths and variants)

Although from early literature onwards the Minotaur appears as being synonymous with the Labyrinth, I have not considered the subterranean prison in any detail in this study. This is mainly because no explicit references to it survive in the known works of Euripides. However, I propose that, given that the imagery of the Minotaur is ineluctably associated with its underground prison, there are possible, implicit allusions to it in *The Cretans* f472e.45-9, when Minos condemns Pasiphae to a subterranean prison and ultimate death:

λάζυσθε τήν πανο[ῦργον, ὡς καλῶς θάνῃ,  
καὶ τήν ξυνεργὸν [τήνδε, δ[ωμάτων δ' ἔσω  
ἄγο]ντες αὐτὰς εἴρ[ξατ' ἐς κρυπτ]ήριον,  
ὥς μ]ηκέτ' εἰσίδ[ωσιν ἡλίου κ]ύκλον.

...seize this evil woman so she may get a fine death, and  
her accomplice here, and take them inside the palace and  
shut them in (a hidden prison?), so they will no longer see  
the orb (of the sun).

Minos has chosen a particular form of death for his wife – her death will come after a period of imprisonment in a subterranean prison. We know from other accounts that Minos will employ Daedalus to construct the Labyrinth in which to incarcerate the Minotaur; it is possible that the idea of another subterranean prison is being alluded to here at f472e.48-9 as part of the fate that awaits the creature. The notion of events unfolding underground is a theme that recurs in *The Cretans*. It may be that more explicit references to the Labyrinth were part of the original version of this, or

indeed, of Euripides' other (fragmentary) 'Cretan plays'. So, this idea of the subterranean, as suggested by Pasiphae's prison and the Labyrinth, is a significant one and one that is a recurring leitmotif in terms of bizarre events unfolding in marginal zones such as Crete. The Labyrinth, a subterranean space in Crete, can be seen as part of the marginal space of the island – situated between the underworld and the world of Minos' palace above ground. The Minotaur who inhabits that space too is 'marginal' – born above ground but imprisoned below it. As I discuss in Chapter 5, the subterranean can be seen as part of the theme of marginal spaces in Euripides' Crete (as are Zeus' cave on Ida to which Europa was conveyed; so too is the coast of Crete, on which Theseus lands (in *Theseus*), and from where Phaedra departs for Troezen (in *Hippolytus*)).

#### **4.7 Salient features of Cretanism: bovine imagery**

In conclusion, two main aspects of Cretanism emerge from the analyses of the passages from the 'Cretan plays': first, a consideration of bovine imagery in terms of a triadic relationship between gods, humans and beasts.<sup>436</sup> Secondly, we see a portrayal of a 'Crete of extremes': the island prompts the protagonists to respond to events in particular ways, resulting in natural laws being turned on their heads.

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<sup>436</sup> Following the conceptual models of Lloyd 2012 (see also my earlier discussions on Lloyd 2012).

#### 4.7.1 Gods, humans and monsters

Analyses of the various accounts of the bovine icons from the Cretan cycle of myths – Io’s heifer, Europa’s bull, Pasiphae’s cow, Poseidon’s bull, and the Minotaur – suggest multiple natures of the bovine,<sup>437</sup> i.e. as exemplified in the phrase. ‘a twofold nature’, διπλῇ φύσει, emphasized in *The Cretans*<sup>438</sup>. I propose that this display of multiple identities in the bovine should be seen as part of the dynamic of ‘the animal in man’ and ‘man in the animal’, where human traits are attributed to creatures and vice versa.<sup>439</sup> Greek myth and religion (and, as Lloyd proposes, Athenian city-state religion) appeared to make clear distinctions between the three worlds - of gods, animals and man, where man was sandwiched between the other two.<sup>440</sup> As Vernant discusses, food, sacrifice - and rituals generally - were elements used to articulate the differences between the three categories of gods, humans and animals, often expressed in terms of the antinomies of mortal-immortal, raw-cooked, corruptible-incorruptible etc. ‘which are at times united and brought together through intermediaries and at others set apart and mutually exclusive, are organised into a coherent system.’<sup>441</sup> So, gods and beasts were used to make sense of what it was to be human. As part of these considerations, in Euripides, the bovine creatures’ close

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<sup>437</sup> I.e. a double-aspectual nature of animal and human.

<sup>438</sup> A phrase said to describe the Minotaur at f472b.29

<sup>439</sup> I.e. a multi-aspectual nature.

<sup>440</sup> Lloyd 2012: 8-10 esp. p. 8 and n. 1; Lloyd’s work itself is based on the earlier work of the French School including Vernant 1980, 1982; Detienne 1979, and Vidal-Naquet 1975.

<sup>441</sup> Vernant 1980: 134

associations with man make them a fitting group from the animal world by which to consider the man-animal categorisations.<sup>442</sup> So, as suggested previously, rather than humans and animals being considered as polar opposites, what appears to be contemplated here instead is a self-understanding of what it takes to be human, by reference to bovine creatures. (I have considered the relationship between the gods and humans on pages 187-188 in Section 4.5.) So, the multiple identities that I referred to earlier is, I suggest, part of the dynamics by which aspects of the nature of man are found in animals, and conversely, aspects of the animal found in man. How then, does this notion of 'multiple identities' fit with the triadic relationship between gods, humans and animals, discussed earlier? It would appear that this three-way dynamic begins to become more nuanced and blurred in Euripides' works, given that all the three categories-animals and humans, and gods - appear to behave like one another in the ways they appear to share or swap their supposedly dominant traits and essences. As we have seen so far, examples such as Poseidon's treatment of Pasiphae, Theseus' and Minos' violent traits and the ambiguous nature of the Minotaur's hybridity all appear to highlight the ways in which the gods-humans-animals divide begins to become blurred in terms of archetype behaviour, and where their natures and essences appear to be shared. There appears to be contained within each, reflections of the traits of the other two groups. In this sense, the Minotaur is a prime physical manifestation of a two-fold nature, displaying

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<sup>442</sup> These include the bull and cow, both with strong agricultural associations. By being featured prominently in the lives of protagonists in myths and in tragedy, they could also be seen to intimately connected to man.

aspects of both human and animal; Minos on the other hand, as a human being, displays animal-like behaviour implicitly. It appears that Euripides' representations appear to question, even challenge, any rigid triadic model. I consider below the dynamics between gods, humans and animals in Euripides' works in terms of their explicit as well as implicit representations.

Aspects of multiple identities of form are found in Io's transmogrification into a heifer, and back again to human form, as alluded to in *Hypsipyle*. The god Zeus plays a key role in Io's fate. Zeus' role is also prominent in terms of the bull in the Europa story: the god himself metamorphosed, suggesting multiple identities. Poseidon's bull which looks like an ordinary bull but is the god's special creature, capable of traversing the seas, and of mating with an artificial cow, as alluded to in *The Cretans* and in *Hippolytus*, also point to this multiple nature. Pasiphae and Daedalus' artificial cow, a *tekhnē*, human invention, yet capable of mating with a material bull and producing an off-spring, also displays aspects of physical multiple identities. The other 'physical multiple identity' present here is of a human, Pasiphae, hidden within the artificial cow and acting as its womb, as portrayed in *The Cretans*. Finally, the Minotaur, with the head of a bull and the body of a human is a complex creature, neither human nor animal, but bearing features of both (as portrayed in *The Cretans* and *Theseus*). There are also some resemblances here with the myths around the phantom of Hera and Ixion, father of the Centaurs. As Vernant suggests in discussing this myth, the union is a mockery based on a vain illusion, not of the true Hera but an

empty cloud, Nephele. So, such a mockery of a union 'can produce only the mockery of a child, where Nephele 'gives birth to a monstrous offspring, a being without race, family or lineage with which to identify, which remains alien to all that exists either on earth or in heaven (...). Neither gods nor men will recognise it although it is not a (...) a true beast.'<sup>443</sup> So like the Centaurs, the Minotaur is also not 'a true beast' and is 'without race, family or lineage'. But, while is not entirely part of the human family of Pasiphae nor of the animal herd of its father, the bull, being unique, its role in Euripides' work is perhaps most importantly, to bridge the gap between human and animal, if not in its appearance, then in its temperament.

As suggested previously, the poet also problematizes the god/human/animal dynamic in terms of multiple identities which contrasts the human-like behaviour of monsters with the inhumane-ness of heroes. Poseidon, Theseus and Minos, famous in their own rights as gods and heroes, display animal-like qualities in venting their wrath and aggression on others such as Hippolytus and Pasiphae. On the other hand, Zeus' and Poseidon's bulls as well as the Minotaur display human capacities of love and tenderness in their interactions with Europa and Pasiphae (as portrayed in *The Cretans*, *Theseus* and *Hippolytus*).

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<sup>443</sup> Vernant 1980: 145-6

The multiple nature of the bovine is reflected in the duplicitous nature of some of the main characters. Minos, Pasiphae, Daedalus, as well as Theseus variously reveal ulterior motives: Minos and Theseus, their self-seeking political ambitions, Pasiphae, the satisfaction of wanton lust, and Daedalus, complicity in the synthesis of illicit desire and invention. Furthermore, the characters, through the display of their respective multiple natures, appear to be challenging ingrained beliefs by suggesting that the rigid definitions between the divisions of god-human-animal are not as clear cut as first might appear. The multiple identities that they appear to display raises larger, philosophical questions of whether, ultimately, gods, humans and animals are really so different from one another given the more fluidly-interchangeable nature of their characters and traits.

Given the findings above, one aspect that Euripides appears to be exploring in the 'Cretan plays' is the notion of multiple identities in a more general sense, and one exemplified by the poet's implicit and explicit depictions of the Minotaur, in particular. We see that such a notion of multiple identities contains within it the seeds for the articulation of a potential - the same creature being able to express polarities such as animal-human, hero-monster, victor-vanquished, active-passive lover etc. In this way, any rigid paradigms of simple polarities such as man-woman, man-animal, Greek-barbarian etc. can be further nuanced through the notion of multiple identities. In the 'Cretan plays' therefore, we see Euripides' deployment of



bovine imagery as part of the imagery of Crete, used to articulate these nuanced perspectives of identity.<sup>444</sup> So, what this study shows is that, in addition to investigating in more depth the question of Greek identity through the formulations of polarities contained within that notion, the poet's representations of Crete appears to extend and render more subtle and complex those vexed questions by introducing an extra dimension- those of multiplicities, which in addition to adding to the discussions on identity, also brings into question concerns on what it is to be human, and what is it that separates us from an animal.

#### **4.7.2 Euripides' Crete 'in extremis'**

In *The Cretans*, it has been observed that the poet focuses on extreme situations of various kinds at particular dramatic moments contained within the corpus of the Cretan myth cycles to emphasize certain Cretan traits. These include the following examples:

First, Cretan women have unusual and unnatural sexual desires which are taken to extremes. These desires extend beyond the unnatural in the human realm including Phaedra's love for her stepson in *Hippolytus* [and Aerope's affair with her manservant in *Cretan Women* which is discussed later]) into the animal world where

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<sup>444</sup> See Reckford 1974:328 referred to below

Pasiphae falls in love with a bull in *The Cretans*. Creatures are also seen to display human behaviour, and humans, animalistic traits.

Next, natural laws are turned on their head: nature is mocked, challenged and fooled; humans, by their inventive skills, are able to overcome natural constraints. Daedalus and Pasiphae together construct a wooden cow that fools Poseidon's bull (a god's bull, no less) into mating with it; Pasiphae, a mortal, gives birth to a creature that defies the natural categories separating the realm of human from animal – it is of both; Daedalus builds Minos a subterranean labyrinth, a prison like no other, where Athenian youths are kept, and from which escape is impossible; Daedalus defies Nature by inventing wings and flying away from Crete. Also, as we shall later see in the case of Aerope in *Cretan Women*, fish in the Cretan seas are capable of feeding on human flesh.<sup>445</sup>

These examples illustrate the extreme and the bizarre on Crete, but also the illusory effects of the events: nothing is what it seems, nothing is impossible. This notion is developed in Chapter 5 in the context of Crete as marginal space.

In Chapter 5 on 'insularity' I consider how an island such as Crete provides the perfect laboratory for experimentations on the subject of marginality, in between

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<sup>445</sup> Collard and Cropp 2008a: 521, test. iiii.

land and sea, mountain and the underworld. I suggest there that such experimentation is possible on a distant location such as Crete, in a sense, as distant from Athens as possible, yet still within the Greek world.<sup>446</sup> However, the island also acts as a foil for Athens. Euripides' Crete appears to scrutinize aspects of cultural differences from Athens. Yet, ultimately, as we will discover, these concerns of civilized behaviour are as pertinent to Athenians themselves, as to Cretans. Reckford suggests a sense of inevitability about the dynamic – that eventually, Crete will 'arrive' in Athens, and although it is the southernmost outpost of the Greek world, its physical separation from Athens is no barrier to such cultural infiltration; paraphrasing Reckford, Crete's presence can be felt in Athens; the Other might just be present in the Self.<sup>447</sup>

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<sup>446</sup> *Theseus* f381: 'Nearly on the very fringes of Europe', referring to Crete.

<sup>447</sup> Reckford 1974:328

## Chapter 5:

### Cretanism and Insularity

#### 5.1 Introduction, overview and methodology

This thesis has so far proposed that the various representations of Crete as an island become a key feature in Euripides' Cretan works. These representations have previously been considered in the following contexts: in Chapter 2, we considered Phaedra, the Cretan princess, who sails from her island home to the mainland, arriving at Troezen. In Chapters 3 and 4, the Cretan islanders, Minos and Pasiphae, were under scrutiny, as was Theseus who sailed from Athens to Crete. In each case, we saw the protagonists either coming from, going to, or remaining on Crete, where the action unfolds.<sup>448</sup> As I discuss in this chapter, the emphasis on travel and location has many consequences including the stressing of the *distance* of the island from the mainland as well as, conversely, the *linking* of the island to Athens, articulating a dialogue between the centre and the periphery.

Findings in earlier chapters were based on a close reading of passages from the 'Cretan plays'. This chapter is different in that it acts as a bridge between that emphasis on close reading of those previous chapters and the concluding thoughts

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<sup>448</sup> This scenario includes *Hippolytus* where Phaedra departs the Crete of her birth and lands in Troezen.

that will follow in Chapter 6. So, it is more issue-led rather than source-led, and forms a bridge into thematic analysis. In this chapter, I consider the notion of insularity in greater detail, based on Constantakopoulou's treatment of islands as both insular and isolated entities, while simultaneously being intensively connected through networks to the other parts of the Greek world.<sup>449</sup> Following on from this, I discuss why the notion of Crete as 'insular' is significant. I start by demonstrating how the emphasis on distancing the island from the mainland has the effect of creating a perceived difference from Athens. I also consider in greater detail how and why the elements of insularity are interwoven into the works previously analyzed, that is, in *Hippolytus* and *The Cretans*, as well as in Euripides' other fragmentary plays, including *Theseus*, *Cretan Women* and *Polyidus*.<sup>450</sup>

It is noted that while this chapter focuses primarily on evidence from the references to Crete in Euripides' works, given their paucity and fragmentary nature, it has been necessary, in part, to widen the analyses to include evidence more generally from myth and so, from material other than Euripides' works. This process, it is hoped, will help to flesh out the evidence as well as use myth more generally, to provide greater insights into Euripides' works, selected here for analysis.

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<sup>449</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007.

<sup>450</sup> Interestingly, other dramatists appear to have been concerned with this theme (although these do not form part of this study). See Cantarella 1964: 157-8 for a fuller list of works by various playwrights on the same themes; apart from Euripides, Aristophanes also wrote a *Polyidus* (or possibly, satirized Euripides' version).

Having considered insularity in the context of Crete and its land- and seascapes, I will consider in more detail how the notion of a Crete in extremis, first discussed in Chapter 4, is deployed in the works to stress the idea of the island as marginal space. The elements of insularity and marginality and how the protagonists respond to events, when taken together, appear to emphasize the notion of Crete as being distinct and different from Athens and the rest of the Greek world. However, I conclude by suggesting an alternative view for considering the evidence (one that was considered in brief in Chapter 4). This view is one that stresses a unity and plurality. This particular perspective can be gleaned from aspects of the mythical characters, the gods and Cretan religion, and the sailings between Crete and the rest of the Greek world, as depicted in Euripides' works. The alternative picture that emerges is one that brings these 'perceived differences' into dialogue with the notion of a unity which seeks to integrate more than to divide Crete from Athens and the rest of the Greek world.

## **5.2 Insularity – the concept**

The concept of insularity, first introduced in Chapter 1, is key to understanding fifth-century perspectives on the composition of the Greek world, particularly in the way it was defined in terms of an opposition between 'the mainland' and 'the island'.

'The island' (any island) was perceived literally in terms of land surrounded entirely

by water, a distinct, self-contained, even closed world.<sup>451</sup> As Constantakopoulou states ‘insularity as a concept, or, what it means to be an island, is, perhaps not surprisingly, central for many ideas in Greek history: safety, danger, prison, isolation, poverty, contempt, sea power (...).’<sup>452</sup> In this study, while noting Constantakopoulou’s applications of the notion of insularity in historiographical terms, I suggest that the concept can equally be investigated in relation to Euripides’ ‘Cretan plays’ in considering the relationship between the centre and its periphery. Furthermore, while I also note Constantakopoulou’s decision to exclude from her study exceptionally large islands including Crete, I suggest that the concept of insularity does nevertheless apply to Euripides’ literary treatment of Crete as an island.<sup>453</sup> In fact, I would propose that the very reasons that Constantakopoulou proposes for the exclusion of Crete from her study are the ones that, in my study, make it ideal for consideration: as we shall see, Crete, in literature, is treated as a very large island, and like, Sicily, is perceived as being more than an island, and treated as ‘almost mainland’.<sup>454</sup> Rackham and Moody refer to it as a ‘miniature continent’, one that is surrounded by water.<sup>455</sup> As well as being treated as an insular landmass, the island’s physical landscape appears in Euripides’ portrayals to be

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<sup>451</sup> See Ceccarelli 2012a: 2: ‘Although islands are, in a very real and physical sense, special types of land surrounded by water, insularity – the perception of that stretch of land as an island – is not a given’. See also Buxton 2009: 202-3 for the importance of islands in myth and cult and examples of such islands, including Crete.

<sup>452</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 1.

<sup>453</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 12-13; also noting that Crete is the largest island in the Aegean Sea. For a treatment of Crete and other ‘large islands’, see also Lombardo 2012: 77.

<sup>454</sup> So, too Crete’s historiographical treatment; see Constantakopoulou 2007: 14; cf. Hdt. 6.1.2.

<sup>455</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 14-15 and n. 74 cf. Rackham and Moody 1996: xi.

largely similar to parts of the mainland, in particular, to the coast of Troezen (as discussed in Chapter 2).<sup>456</sup> It can thus be perceived as being somewhere between an island and the mainland. This perception has at least two potential consequences: Crete can be seen in Euripides' works to 'behave' sometimes like an island and at other times like the mainland. In the former case, the stress is on its distance and isolation from Athens, whereas in the latter case, there is an emphasis on its links to a well-connected series of networks, underlining a unity with Athens as well as other parts of the Greek world. In other words, the links intimate an active relationship between the centre and its periphery.

One notion underlying the concept of insularity is the distinction drawn between 'an island' and 'the islands' of the Greek world.<sup>457</sup> As mentioned previously, the former suggests a distinct, unique world, which in terms of the ideas of safety, danger and isolation, etc., makes Crete a closed, inward-looking island. On the other hand, the use of the term 'the islands' implies being part of an extensive network of interconnectivity between the various islands of the Aegean and the mainland Greek world and beyond. As Constantakopoulou suggests:

The concept of insularity had two main aspects: on one hand, it was understood as an expression of connectivity, and on the other as an indication of isolation. In other words, islands were understood as

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<sup>456</sup> In Chapter 2, I suggested that, in certain situations, Troezen was configured in terms that recalled Crete i.e. the island, so what is being suggested in this thesis is that, in Euripides' works, islands and mainlands appear to resemble one another, in specific cases.

<sup>457</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 2, 6, 20.



‘distinct’ closed worlds, ideal locations for the extraordinary and the bizarre, but at the same time they were also perceived as parts of a complex reality of interaction in the Aegean Sea.<sup>458</sup>

Given these two contrary perspectives on insularity, in this chapter, I will consider how these notions may be seen to apply in the case of Euripides’ Crete. My arguments are framed in two parts: first, I analyze aspects of Euripides’ works which suggest that Crete is *different* – a wild world outside civilization, bizarre, closed and ‘distant’ from the hub that is Athens.<sup>459</sup> Following that, I consider how Euripides’ Crete is simultaneously constructed as being part of a greater unity with Athens, displaying facets of *plurality* that serve to connect more than to separate Crete from the rest of the Greek world.

### 5.3 Crete as an ‘island’

#### 5.3.1 Crete and its location

Despite its fragmentary nature, enough survives of Euripides’ *Theseus* to discern the re-telling of certain key elements of the great Athenian hero’s Cretan adventures (already well-known from epic and early sources), notably Theseus’ arrival on the island and the killing of the Minotaur, and his subsequent triumphant return to Athens.<sup>460</sup> As discussed in chapter 4, Theseus’ voyage to Crete to vanquish the creature and put an end to the long-standing obligations of sending human tribute to

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<sup>458</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 2.

<sup>459</sup> As a parallel, see Buxton 2009: 101-102 fig. 40 for a discussion on the ways an artist might symbolise ‘the degree of distance-from-humanity’.

<sup>460</sup> E.g. from epic noting *Od.* 11.321-3 on Theseus’ journey from Crete to ‘sacred Athens’.

Minos resulted in one of the hero's greatest victories. The story also metaphorically connects Athens, at the heart of the Greek world, to a Crete that was probably perceived as one of its furthest outposts.<sup>461</sup> This idea of a distant location appears to be emphasized through, for example, Theseus' travels from Athens to Crete and back to Athens via Dia (or Naxos), with Crete representing the place where he undertakes various superhuman feats and emerges a true hero. In *Theseus*, f381, we find a reference to Crete's location, in the following terms:<sup>462</sup>

σχεδὸν παρ' αὐτοῖς κρασπέδοις Εὐρωπίας

Nearly on the very fringes of Europe.

There is, understandably, some doubt as to the line's exact context,<sup>463</sup> but if this description does refer to Crete, it emphasizes the idea of the island being located at an extreme end, *κράσπεδον*, the edge or margin.<sup>464</sup>

The notion of great distance and physical separation implied in *Theseus* f381 could also emphasize Crete's *isolation*. This opposition between mainland and island has the effect of constructing the island as an 'other' - a closed world, distant from the

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<sup>461</sup> Although Greek communities stretched from Sicily and modern-day Marseille in the West to Sebastopol in the East, and Bulgaria in the North to Libya in the South, Crete was the southern-most *island* and the feature of it being an island located as far south as it is possible from Athens, is, I suggest, significant. Crete was seen as 'the southern boundary of their universe' (Myers 1953: 260).

<sup>462</sup> I.e. from an Athenian perspective given that Theseus' imminent arrival on the island is described later in f382.

<sup>463</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 421 n.1 on f381: 'Probably referring to Crete' (All translations of the fragmentary *Theseus* are taken from Collard and Cropp 2008a: 420-7).

<sup>464</sup> *LSJ* 891

hub that is Athens.<sup>465</sup> A consideration of the distance between Crete and mainland Greece, when seen in terms of ‘periphery *v.* centre’, brings into play two notions: the theme of the sea separating the two landmasses, and the mapping of the Greek world in the context of the journeys to and from Crete that the protagonists in the ‘Cretan plays’ undertake. So, under this scenario, the centre appears to sever its relationship with its periphery and to emphasize a sense of remoteness and isolation.

### 5.3.2 The sea as a recurring theme

Given that a key concept of insularity is the idea of a Crete as an island surrounded by sea, in this section I first consider that ‘surrounding sea’. I then consider the features of the island in terms of its physical landscape and its mountains. These features are either part of the stories, or are at least alluded to in Euripides’ ‘Cretan plays’. As I discuss in the specific cases that follow, we note their representations both in terms of materiality (that is, for example, detailed descriptions of the Cretan Sea) and metaphor (for example, the Cretan Sea as a harbinger of evil). As far as possible, I consider both perspectives, stressing the fluidity of these possible interpretations.<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> Of course, there are other such examples such as Thebes as an ‘other’; what appears to make Crete different is that first, it is an island; secondly, the separation by the sea. Both these features place it in the same category as e.g. Sicily, another significant island in the Greek world and in tragedy (although outside the ambit of this thesis- see Chapter 6 for a brief consideration).

<sup>466</sup> See e.g. Lloyd 2012: 90-1 on the need to not neglect ‘the semantic stretch – the multiple meanings and associations – of those very same terms outside the specialist context’ (here, the sea and the mountains, for example). ‘We may allow water to be a substance or a process’ (Lloyd 2012: 90) (my parenthesis).

I begin by considering briefly the concept in antiquity of the sea itself: a complex and multi-layered notion. As Oliver *et al.* suggest in the context of the ancient Greek world, 'at the most fundamental level, the sea is a geographical given, and its nature (winds, tides, currents) and spatial relationship with the land, whether continent or island, is a fundamental constraint on the historical process.'<sup>467</sup> The theme of the sea can also be viewed from a more nuanced, multi-aspectual perspective, as being symbolic.<sup>468</sup>

Much of the action in the stories invokes the sea in different ways, especially in the context of sea crossings: first, the trials and tribulations associated with sailing to and from Crete, and secondly, each instance of crossing, suggests linking various places as much as intimating the distance between them over the sea. So, the Cretan Sea is invoked both in physical and metaphorical terms. Portrayals of the Cretan Sea first appear in Homer and are then also similarly used in fifth-century tragedy, particularly in the case of Euripides as well as Sophocles.

In the *Odyssey*, as Haft notes, the descriptions of the Cretan Sea that occur (in no fewer than four instances) share various common characteristics: a dramatic storm sequence which is often related to the will of Zeus or another god, and which results

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<sup>467</sup> See Oliver, Brock, Cornell and Hodkinson 2000: v

<sup>468</sup> E.g. see Hopman 2012: 5, for interesting discussions on the treatment of symbols.

in the loss of course, life and property.<sup>469</sup> These events occur either on the approach to Crete (e.g. *Od.* 3.291-300; 14.382-3; 19.186-9) or upon leaving the island (*Od.* 14.293-309), so the waters off Crete are consistently portrayed as rough and as posing an inevitable threat to those sailing towards, away from, or near to the island. Some of these ideas appear to be echoed in Sophocles' and Euripides' works.

πολλὰ γὰρ ὥστ' ἀκάμαντος  
ἢ νότου ἢ βορέα τις  
κύματ' <ἄν>εὐρέι πόντῳ  
βάντ' ἐπιόντα τ' ἴδοι,  
οὕτῳ δὲ τὸν Καδμογενῇ  
τρέφει, τὸ δ' αὔξει βιότου  
πολύπονον ὥσπερ πέλαγος  
Κρήσιον·

The reference here also appears to mirror Euripides' portrayals of the sea (discussed below). The Chorus in Sophocles refers to it in specific terms: here, the Cretan Sea appears rough; its 'many waves' are whipped up by the south or north winds. As

Rosenquist suggests '[t]he Cretan sea is proverbially rough, and the adjective

Κρησίον is (...) (a) reference to a treacherous body of water.'<sup>471</sup>

In Euripides' 'Cretan plays', the allusions to the Cretan Sea in many ways appear to echo those from epic and from Sophocles. The references in Sophocles appear to be similar to those expressed by the Chorus of the Women of Troezen in *Hippolytus* in lines 732-62 as well as by Theseus at line 822-4 when he refers to 'a sea of troubles' so great, across which he cannot navigate:

....πέλαγος εἰσορῶ  
τοσοῦτον ὥστε μήποτ' ἐκνεῦσαι πάλιν  
μηδ' ἐκπερᾶσαι κύμα τῆσδε συμφορᾶς.

....I look upon a sea of troubles so great  
I cannot swim out of them or cross the flood of this sorrow.

While a literal reading such as Rosenquist's provides one perspective, a more multi-layered interpretation is also possible, given that both physical and metaphorical readings of the Cretan Sea are evident from the various passages from both Sophocles and Euripides. These troubled waters allude to a life of troubles. More generally, the sea in tragedy could be seen to represent the ebb and flow of life, acting as a metaphor for life's continual change: Euripides' Cretan characters such as Pasiphae and Phaedra's troubled lives appear to echo these

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<sup>471</sup> See Rosenquist 1978: 19.

ideas. There is also an element of unpredictability lurking behind the perceptions of the sea. The state of the sea depends on the direction – north or south – from which the wind blows, indicating uncertainty: the sea is the harbinger of troubles but also of good fortune (the man born in Thebes in *Women of Trachis* in line 116 is full of troubles, but the Sea can also turn his fortunes around and make him great).<sup>472</sup> The changing fortunes of the Cretan Sea have similar resonances in Euripides, finding parallels in the lives of protagonists in the ‘Cretan plays’: the lives of Phaedra, Minos, Pasiphae and Theseus are all variously subjected directly or indirectly to the vagaries of that Sea.

Although the exact term ‘the Cretan Sea’ is (as far as evidence exists) not found in any of Euripides’ ‘Cretan plays’, references to it are strongly suggested by the Chorus in *Hippolytus* lines 732-62 where (as discussed in Chapter 2) its many features are vividly described. First, its physical attributes are recalled in graphic detail: we can see, hear and even taste it in *Hippolytus* 753-4 (πόντιον κύμα, ‘the swell of the sea’, ‘roaring’, or ‘the slap of the waves against the ship’s sides’, ἀλίκτυπον, also its taste, in ἄλμας, ‘deep’ or ‘brine’).<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> ‘The man born in Thebes’ is also referred to as ‘the son of Cadmus’ in other translations, e.g. Torrance 1966;  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0222%3Acard%3D112>  
 [07/03/14].

<sup>473</sup> See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion.

Nautical imagery is also evoked in the play, detailing aspects of the sea, sailing, anchoring, ropes and mariners. I considered in Chapter 2 references to Minos that alluded to Crete's naval power and maritime supremacy, again stressing the sea's importance. The sea is also contextualised as being the domain of two goddesses in particular-Aphrodite and Dictynna.<sup>474</sup> We note a collective invocation of the sea represented in terms of its physical features, its role in terms of nautical imagery and its potential as an expression of might and power-both divine and human (given that Crete was perceived as a thalassocracy and was the domain of particular goddesses). This 'collective invocation' of the Cretan Sea emphasizes its significance in the plays as displayed by its multifarious roles.<sup>475</sup>

In *Hippolytus*, Euripides uses the general, recurrent imagery of the treachery of the waters surrounding Crete to convey Phaedra's losing battle against her own emotions; the motif of the Cretan Sea is intimately associated with her fate (see Chapter 2). On one level, it is the physical space that Phaedra must cross (and which the Chorus allude to e.g. in lines 752-3) as part of her destiny. There are also parallel metaphorical transitions that Phaedra must face in the course of her journey from Crete to Athens, from childhood to maturity, virginity to marriage, infamous

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<sup>474</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 100-103; also Roisman 1999: 40.

<sup>475</sup> See note 472 re Lloyd 2012: 90-1 on the need to consider multiple meanings and interpretations.



homeland to glorious Athens, and escape from Crete's promiscuity (a destiny already charted by her mother, Pasiphae); and, finally, from life to a tragic death.<sup>476</sup>

Theseus (in *Theseus*), too, undergoes a 'physical journey' that could also stand as a metaphor. The actual adventures that Theseus embarks upon to and from his journey to Crete also represent various rites of passage. He returns from Crete a hero and worthy king of Athens – that is to say, Theseus proves himself a worthy hero when he challenges Minos, when he vanquishes the Minotaur and rescues Ariadne (suggested variously in *Theseus* f382, 386b-c, and *Hippolytus* line 339). Theseus can be seen as pitting both his physical strength and wit against all the elements (including the Cretan Sea) and emerging heroic: he returns to Athens after his exploits on Crete and is immediately crowned king.<sup>477</sup>

It is also likely that in the cases of Daedalus (in *The Cretans*) and Polyidus (in *Polyidus*) their journeys from Athens and Argos respectively also involved traversing the rough waters of the Cretan Sea. The Cretan Sea itself can also be seen to be charged with knowledge-endowing qualities; on traversing the Cretan Sea and reaching the island, both Daedalus and Polyidus appear to have enhanced the skills that they possessed while in their respective homelands; the former excels himself as inventor of fantastical *technai*, and the latter's life-restoring powers appear to be

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<sup>476</sup> See Haft 1981: 135-6 for a discussion on the transitions in Phaedra's life.

<sup>477</sup> E.g. Eur. *Suppliants*; see Mills 1997: 97-103 for discussions on Theseus as king of Athens. See also Chapter 4.

intensified on the island. It is possible that another well-known personage, Thyestes, also travelled to Crete.<sup>478</sup> One might postulate that Thyestes came to acquire new insights and understanding after his fall from grace, as a direct result of his journeys to Crete, having first safely navigated his way through the challenging Cretan Sea.

As mentioned previously, the other context in which the oceans appear to be evoked is in terms of sea crossings: each instance of crossing suggests a link between various places as much as the distance between them over the sea. In *Hippolytus*, Crete and Troezen appear to be connected via Phaedra; there are also links with Athens through Theseus. In *The Cretans*, Daedalus' presence evokes links between Athens and Crete, as well as between Crete and Sicily to which both the architect and Minos later travel. In *Theseus*, Theseus' arrival on Crete is graphically described (by the Herdsman at f382). In *Cretan Women*, links between Crete and Argos are suggested, the latter being the provenance of Atreus and Thyestes.<sup>479</sup> In *Phrixus B*, Crete and Phoenicia are connected through Europa's journey to the island.<sup>480</sup> In *Polyidus*, Polyidus and his father Coeranus sail between Corinth and Crete.<sup>481</sup> As previously stated, the journeys themselves suggest a Crete that is separate and distant from the other places mentioned in the works: Phoenicia, Troezen, Athens, Argos, Corinth

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<sup>478</sup> In *Cretan Women*; see Collard and Cropp 2008a: 518; (although noting that the evidence is too fragmentary to say with certainty). Thyestes is said to have appeared in Crete in rags after losing his throne to Atreus in Argos.

<sup>479</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 517.

<sup>480</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008b: f820, 440-1.

<sup>481</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008b: 93-5.

and Sicily, for example. The sailings also imply traversing (and negotiating) the seas, in particular, the Cretan Sea, before finally reaching their destination.

So far then, we have seen that the Cretan Sea in Euripides could be interpreted both physically and metaphorically.<sup>482</sup> Its physical and geographical qualities are described, and thus made vivid and material, appearing to echo the protagonists' changing fortunes. Surviving the Cretan Sea's crossing appears to endow the characters with special attributes or to enhance existing ones. In sum, the Cretan Sea appears to impact on the lives and fortunes of Euripides' protagonists in various ways, echoing the Cretan Sea's ebbs and flows. Their stories also emphasize their crossings to and from the island, stressing the importance of the Cretan Sea which acts both as a barrier and a unifier between their points of departure in the rest of the Greek world and the island. It holds the potential to both link as well as to divide the island from the mainland, stressing the complexities in the relationships between the centre and the periphery.

### **5.3.3 The Cretan Landscape as a theme**

Having considered the seascape as a theme in Euripides' 'Cretan plays', I now turn to the landscape of Crete. In this section, I discuss in more detail Euripides'

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<sup>482</sup> While accepting that these interpretations of the sea can be said to be more general and equally applicable to cases other than the Cretan Sea, I suggest that the Cretan Sea is particularly suitable to being contextualized in terms of isolation and connectivity (see Wright:2005: 203 and n.153; 205 on the sea in Euripides' 'Escape Tragedies'; see also my later discussions).

representations of Crete's mountains, which, I suggest, could also be considered as a metaphor. These features of mountains have the effect of suggesting that Crete is 'marginal' in many senses, both physical and conceptual: not only does its physical location, on the edges of the Greek world, distant from Athens, suggest this marginality,<sup>483</sup> but the idea that it is 'in between' land and sea, neither one nor the other, reinforces this idea.

## 5.4 Features of the landscape:

### 5.4.1 Mountains

Generally-speaking, a 'mountain' in the classical world was viewed in terms of its location, height and importance. It was used 'to give color and geographical description' in literary works.<sup>484</sup> And, as can be expected, the term was applied to include the most famous examples from the mythological world; the Cretan Mount Ida was among such prominent 'designated' mountains, ὄρη (*orē*), which also stood for specific regions of the Greek world.<sup>485</sup> As I have suggested previously, the *theme* of Mount Ida is deployed in *The Cretans* and in *Hippolytus*-as if to emphasize the play's location in the former work, (where at *The Cretans* f472f, Minos refers to the islanders as 'You Cretans, children of Ida'), and to allude to the island's significance

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<sup>483</sup> See Armstrong 2006:1; Crete is perceived as 'at once central yet marginal', itself indicative of a paradox, a view that helped shape the various Athenian perceptions of the island and how it came to be represented in fifth-century drama.

<sup>484</sup> See Williams 1991:80.

<sup>485</sup> I.e. here, Mount Ida stood for Crete; See Buxton 1994: 81 for definitions and classifications of 'mountains'.

in the latter. There also existed other Mount Idas in the ancient world but the Cretan Mount Ida is probably the most well-known, given its associations with Zeus' birth.<sup>486</sup> I suggested previously that, in the case of *Hippolytus*, the mountain was deliberately invoked in order to stress Phaedra's Cretan roots through the princess' associations with Zeus and the mountain itself.<sup>487</sup> Instructively, Buxton discusses a range of 'uses' of mountains: as pasture, source of wood and raw materials generally, and also stresses their value for hunting, and travel and warfare.<sup>488</sup> One other important deployment could be 'their role as locations for sanctuaries of the gods.'<sup>489</sup> This is especially significant for Crete: Zeus was pre-eminent as 'mountain god', and this is certainly true in the context of the Cretan Mount Ida, given it was where the god was born (in a cave within the mountain), and presided over. As we saw in Chapter 3, as if to give prominence to this association, the rites associated with a Zeus mountain cult invoking mountain spirits are described in vivid detail in *The Cretans* f472.9-16. As Bacon suggests, the purpose of the references to mountains in literary works is not only geographical but also evocative.<sup>490</sup> In this case, we see the mountain theme being evoked in terms of its iconic status as the place where

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<sup>486</sup> Another Mount Ida occurs in the Troas in Anatolia. See

<http://pleiades.stoa.org/search?SearchableText=Ida+M.&submit=Search> [ 27/07/12].

<sup>487</sup> Zeus is, in effect, Phaedra's grandfather, being the father of her father, Minos. See *Hipp.* 683 'Zeus the father of my race'; See also Barrett 2001:290; also see pp. 20, 46.

<sup>488</sup> Discussed variously in Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>489</sup> See Buxton 1994: 81-7.

<sup>490</sup> See Bacon 1961: 157-8; Bacon suggests distance, danger, and inhospitable country as reasons to invoke mountains (interestingly, paralleling Constantakopoulou's findings on the perceptions of islands (2007:1).

sacred rites to Zeus are performed.<sup>491</sup> The Cretan Mount Ida also becomes iconic in terms of Crete, the island.

In *The Cretans* f472.f, Minos refers (possibly) to the Chorus as ‘children of Ida’.<sup>492</sup>

ἀλλ’ ὦ Κρη̃τες, Ἰδα̃ς τέκνα ...

You Cretans, children of Ida!

Here Minos, ruler of Crete, is possibly addressing his people by reference to its most famous mountain, Ida. In this context, it is noteworthy that earlier in the work the Chorus referred to rites they performed to the *Idaeon* Zeus (at f472.10). As Buxton proposes:

Myths present an image of mountains which is both more extreme and more consistent than that of everyday life (i.e. its geographical/social uses), paring down that wide range of uses which men actually made of the *oros*, and coming back again and again to the same few, symbolic productive characteristics.<sup>493</sup>

We see that references to Mount Ida are suggested more than once in *The Cretans*.

Mountains were believed to be from the era of pre-history, humanity’s first places of

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<sup>491</sup> As indicated by the rites of Zeus worship suggested in *The Cretans* f472.10-15; See also Hesiod *Theogony* 477-84; see Williams 1991: 81 on Ap. Rhod. *Argonautica* 2.523-4 and 2.1015.

<sup>492</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 550-1 and n. 1 which suggests a degree of uncertainty in locating the line with precision.

<sup>493</sup> See Buxton 1994: 88 (my parenthesis).

habitation.<sup>494</sup> In the case of Crete, Mount Ida was where the god Zeus was born. It was also where Minos received the first laws from his father, Zeus, with whom he conferred once every nine years;<sup>495</sup> the god personally educated his mortal son in a cave.<sup>496</sup> The combination of Crete as Zeus' birthplace and the conferring on the Greeks of their first laws in the mountains of the island accord the mountains with a special revered status. As Haft suggests, Crete was accorded the status of *antigua mater* of the Greeks.<sup>497</sup> The Cretans could legitimately claim that several gods either appear to be Cretan or to have strong associations with their island. According to Diodorus Siculus (writing in the first century BC) Cretans were thought to be extremely conservative adherents to prehistoric religious practice during the classical period.<sup>498</sup> Given the Cretans' generally revered status in some contexts, we see yet another symbolic characteristic of the mountain come into play – the place where the divine and the human come together. In this context, the mountain is also a marginal zone being strictly neither the abode of gods or humans but of both.

The mountain is also the place which sanctions unions between mortals and gods; indeed, the sexual union of Europa and Zeus, for example, is part of a long-standing

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<sup>494</sup> See Williams 1991: 79 cf. Hesiod *Theog.* 129-30; *song of Orpheus* 1.496.

<sup>495</sup> Some versions suggest it was Mount Dicte; see also Plato *Laws* 624D, *Minos* 319C; *Od.* 19.178 on the relationship between Zeus and Minos. See Ustinova 2009: 245 n.159 for the significance of *enneôros* ('nine years').

<sup>496</sup> *Od.* 19.178-9; Plato *Laws* 624-625a.

<sup>497</sup> See Haft 1981: 130-1.

<sup>498</sup> Diodorus Siculus V.64.2, 77.4-8.

tradition of gods' unions with mortals in mountain settings.<sup>499</sup> In Euripides, this relationship between Europa and Zeus (as Minos' parents) is recalled in the parados of *The Cretans* f472.1-2. There are a number of possible reasons why the story is highlighted: first, it emphasizes Europa's union with this main Olympian divinity which produced three mortals, 'famous sons', Minos, Rhadamanthys and Sarpedon, each illustrious in their own right.<sup>500</sup> The union also goes on to establish the foundations of a Cretan royal dynasty, which carries on expanding and strengthening its ties with Athens and Troezen, given Theseus' voyage to Crete (in *Theseus*) and Phaedra's subsequent marriage to Theseus (in *Hippolytus*). These two events could further suggest that Crete is being brought under Athens' civilizing influence and control, serving to further reinforce Crete's ties with Athens.<sup>501</sup> The iconic Mount Ida in distant Crete, the place where gods and humans co-mingle, has now been brought 'closer' to Athens. The ties between the centre and the periphery can be seen to be further reinforced by these associations.

#### 5.4.2 Cretan land- and seascapes as marginal space

In this section, I have considered the land- and seascapes on Crete – specifically the Cretan Sea and the mountains – which, like the island, appear to be treated as

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<sup>499</sup> See Bacchylides 17.30-31 for a reference to Zeus' and Europa's sexual union on Mt. Ida in Crete; also, Buxton 1994: 92-3 for a more general list of encounters between gods and mortals on mountains.

<sup>500</sup> As described in the much later Moschus' version, *Europa* 160-1.

<sup>501</sup> See Mills 1997: 16.



marginal elements in the selected plays of Euripides.<sup>502</sup> Their physical features are deployed metaphorically to suggest the occurrences of the bizarre within these spaces. Both the humans and the animals in Crete appear to be ‘in-between’ creatures, being neither one nor the other, each often containing within them aspects of the other. In the next section, I consider in more detail three exotic creatures in particular who are part of Euripides’ Cretan landscape: they are the Minotaur (as featured in *The Cretans* and *Theseus*), the bull from the sea (*Hippolytus*), and the colour-changing calf (*Polyidus*). In analysing them, I hope to show how their ‘in-between’, hybrid status reinforces the notion that they reflect the marginality of Crete and its land- and seascapes as being home to bizarre and unusual events.

## 5.5 Crete and its creatures

### 5.5.1 The Minotaur

We saw in Chapter 4 that the Minotaur is a mix, comprising features of man and bull, but not belonging wholly to either category. Collard and Cropp translate the word ἀποφώλιον from *The Cretans* f472a as ‘born to sterility’.<sup>503</sup> In this respect, the creature does not appear to resemble either parent either in looks or in its constitution. Not only is it sterile, it is also unique. The creature is depicted in

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<sup>502</sup> Seashores, being neither sea nor land, are another feature which could be seen as marginal space (although not considered in this thesis given that there do not appear to be any direct [or even indirect] references to them in the surviving works). There may, of course, have been other features highlighted as marginal space in works and fragments featuring Crete that are lost to us. Interestingly, Broodbank 2000, e.g., specifically divides ‘the islandscape into land, coast, sea, horizon and sky (three broad bands and two liminal zones)’ (p.23).

<sup>503</sup> See Collard, Cropp 2008a: 541, f472a, n.1.

Euripides as having the head of a bull and the body of a human (*The Cretans* f427b.31-33). Whether it is equally animal and human is debatable if we are to read into the notion that its *head* is animal, suggesting it thinks like an animal.

Conversely, its human body suggests that it could *act* like a man. Certainly, in *The Cretans*, the elements of savagery normally associated with animals (including a bull) are less than evident in this creature so that it appears more human. Likewise, aspects of its human half bear elements of savagery more akin to animalistic behaviour (as depicted in *Theseus* f386b where it is described categorically as θηρὸς, 'a beast'). So, it could be suggested that the creature is truly 'marginal' in that it is neither human nor animal, although it bears traits of both. Yet, it is a creature in its own right, self-contained and independent. Like Crete, it is unique, a monstrous creation, yet worthy of standing up even to Theseus, a man who was no ordinary mortal but a great Athenian hero. The Minotaur certainly proved a worthy adversary to Theseus and the two appear evenly matched in their duel which involves hand to hand combat (*Theseus* f386b). From the fragment, it appears that it is only by the use of a club (a human invention) by Theseus that brings about the creature's downfall. If the lines in *Theseus* f386c are spoken by Theseus, it is perhaps a demonstration of the savagery that the hero is capable of (likewise, this would apply to the Minos, if the words were spoken by him). In essence, in this work, the Minotaur is pitted against Theseus, where the latter could be seen as representing Athenian values, and the former, an embodiment of both savagery and civilized behaviour that Crete appears to represent. In both the Minotaur and Theseus we

find aspects of civilized behaviour and savagery;<sup>504</sup> so, both Athens and Crete each appear to act as a foil for the other, each reflecting aspects of the other.

### 5.5.2 The Bull from the Sea

Having considered one creature from Crete, the Minotaur, I now consider another, the amphibious bull from Troezen from *Hippolytus*. Recalling the discussions in Chapter 2 on the bull from the sea which makes its appearance at *Hippolytus* lines 1210-1229, I previously suggested that this bizarre event occurred on the coast of Troezen, a liminal zone similar to Crete. The similarities between these regions are echoed in the case of the two goddesses Artemis and Dictynna who are invoked in the contexts of the watery landscapes of both Troezen and Crete (in *Hippolytus* e.g. at 145-150). The seashores in both regions where these goddesses hold sway can be seen as marginal zones, being neither sea nor land; so too is the bull from the sea an amphibious land creature that is neither entirely of one element or the other, but of both. The creature itself emerges from the sea and goes to the coast, transcending two liminal spheres, before returning to the sea. At *Hippolytus* 1210-1217 there is a description of the creature and its effects on the bystanders:

κᾶπειτ' ἀνοιδῆσάν τε καὶ πέριξ ἄφρον  
πολὺν καχλάζον ποντίῳ φουσημάτι  
χωρεῖ πρὸς ἀκτὰς οὗ τέθριππος ἦν ὄχος.  
αὐτῷ δὲ σὺν κλύδωνι καὶ τρικυμία

<sup>504</sup> The animal-like behaviour of several of the protagonists can be contrasted with the notion that Crete was known to the Athenians as 'the first civilization' (*Od.* 19.173-9). As Harrison 1963:41 states: 'Crete was the mother and source not of barbarism, (...) but of civilization.'

κῦμ' ἐξέθηκε ταῦρον, ἄγριον τέρας·  
οὐ πᾶσα μὲν χθών φθέγματος πληρουμένη 1215  
φρικῶδες ἀντεφθέγγετ', εἰσορῶσι δὲ  
κρεῖσσον θέαμα δεργμάτων ἐφαίνετο

And then as the sea-surge made it swell and seethe up much  
foam all about, it came toward the shore where the four-horse chariot  
was.  
With its very swell and surge the wave put forth a monstrous, savage  
bull. The whole land was filled with its bellowing and gave back  
unearthly echoes, and as we looked on it the sight was too great for our  
eyes to bear.<sup>505</sup>

The lines are replete with sea-related imagery, including the references to the sea's  
'swell' and 'foam' in 1210-1.<sup>506</sup> The bull from the sea in line 1214, as with bulls in  
myth generally, is associated with both Poseidon and also with Zeus.<sup>507</sup> In lines  
1213-4, the bull is portrayed very much as 'monstrous, savage'. It both looks  
terrifying and behaves terrifyingly. Not only does it emerge rather suddenly out of  
the sea, the sense is that the sea itself has given birth to it, as the creature surges out  
of the waves. It is described as τέρας, a word which, as Halleran comments, 'could  
be applied to any extraordinary sign or object, whether a portent, a centaur, or here,  
a bull from the sea'.<sup>508</sup> τέρας could equally be applied to the Minotaur, given that  
the word retains some of its sense of 'marvellous'.<sup>509</sup> As we saw earlier in Chapter 4,  
the Hesiodic fragment f93.16 from *The Catalogue of Women*, the word θαῦμα,

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<sup>505</sup> Trans. Kovacs 1995: 239.

<sup>506</sup> See Halleran 1995:253 for a detailed analysis of this passage.

<sup>507</sup> See Halleran 1995: 23 n.8; bulls are inextricably associated with Hippolytus, Theseus and the Cretan tales from mythology.

<sup>508</sup> See Halleran 1995: 253.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid; as far as can be gleaned from the fragments of *The Cretans* and *Theseus*, the word is not used in connection with the Minotaur.

‘wonder’, was similarly used to describe the Minotaur. Parallels can be discerned between these two ‘bull-related’ creatures, both hybrids in different ways-the first half-man, half-animal, the second, half-land, half-sea creature. The bovine elements in both creatures reinforce a recurring theme in the ‘Cretan plays’. Both creatures find a home within the overall idea that is Crete-a marginal space where bizarre events and hybrid creatures occur.

### 5.5.3 The Colour-Changing Calf

Another form of ‘marginalism’, also bovine-related, can be seen at work in the Euripidean fragment, *Polyidus*. A summary of its plot is as follows: Minos’ son, Glaucus, disappeared. When Minos inquired about the boy from Apollo, the god indicated that the clues to Glaucus’ whereabouts lay with a ‘portentous creature’. This turned out to be a calf which changes its colour ‘three times a day, every four hours, first white, then ruddy, and after that black.’<sup>510</sup> The calf in this work can be construed in at least two ways: first, this is yet another work where events unfolding on Crete involve a bovine creature which is central to the action (in this case, the seer Polyidus solves the riddle by comparing the calf to a mulberry tree, the fruit of which also changes colours in a similar way). Secondly, this calf is yet another strange phenomenon (not unlike the Minotaur) which, unlike a real cow, is capable

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<sup>510</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008b: 93, 95; the calf was said to have been born amongst Minos’ herd.

of colour-metamorphosing. There is no other known case of a similar calf in mythology; in *Polyidus*, as in Euripides' other 'Cretan plays', it seems normal to find bizarre creatures on Crete – yet another example of the island acting as a liminal space where extraordinary events abound.

So far we have considered the various features of the Cretan landscape in turn: the sea and the mountains. We have seen how both the island itself and the features contained within it reflect aspects of marginality. I then considered cases of 'marginal creatures' – both in terms of beasts such as the Minotaur, the bull from the sea and the colour-changing calf; the first exhibits characteristics of both man and animal, the second, amphibious traits, and the third, a strange hybrid. Equally, we saw that some hybrids had human-like natures while some humans displayed animal-like characteristics. So, the 'in-between-ness' that these creatures display is echoed both in the land- and seascapes. These bizarre beings and events, when considered against the backdrop of the Cretan landscape, start to appear perhaps less strange and more the 'norm'. This marginality that the various hybrids display can also be thought of in terms of the difference and distinctness of Crete from Athens, with bizarre creatures and events characterizing this difference.

These tensions created by perceptions of distinctness and difference and the concept of insularity might have further implications in an Athenian context. On the one hand, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, islands were generally viewed as

closed worlds. The notion of a closed world contains within it the kernel of complete independence. As Broodbank argues, 'islands at any given point (...) might move in either direction (...) within a continuum between complete independence to complete integration.'<sup>511</sup> If part of Athenian perceptions of Crete were of a closed world displaying aspects of the abnormal and the 'uncivilized', the island could be perceived as veering more towards complete independence than integration – a dangerous place to be in terms of Athens' desire to exert its power and influence throughout the Empire. The actions and consequences of characters of the islands of the Greek world (of which Crete is the largest) appear to present the very real danger of adversely affecting life on Athens. 'The monster is not just in faraway Crete. (...) We cannot escape evil by sailing into a safe harbour of Athenian reason and control.'<sup>512</sup>

However, as Crete is present in Athens, so too is Athens present in Crete. As I suggest in the next sections, the physical and metaphorical distancing between Crete and Athens is but one side of the coin. On the other, we can also discern from Euripides' 'Cretan plays' a unity between the island and the hub of the Greek world. So, these suggest instead interaction, integration and interconnectivity more than isolation and separation.

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<sup>511</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 2 cf. Broodbank 2000: 10.

<sup>512</sup> Reckford 1974: 328

## 5.6 Unity through Plurality

So far in this chapter, the study has focussed on both physical and metaphorical interpretations of Crete: its distance from Athens and the Greek mainland, its insular nature, its sea- and landscapes including mountains. Certain particularities of Crete including hybrids such as the Minotaur and the bull from the sea, and the bizarre events such as Pasiphae's love for a bull, all appear to stress the island's distinct nature. Together, the various interpretations of Crete's location, its physical features and the characteristics of certain protagonists and their stories, have highlighted the island's distinctness and difference and a general alienation from Athens.

In this section, I propose a contrary perspective by suggesting that these differences are indeed what surface on a first reading of Euripides' 'Cretan plays'. A deeper analysis, however, suggests a complimentary aspect to this apparent distinctness, another theme that seeks to assert a unity above and beyond this apparent diversity, emphasizing instead, a greater commonality of perceptions between Crete and the rest of the Greek world.<sup>513</sup> I refer to this commonality as an expression of plurality.<sup>514</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> Buxton 2009: 157 (paraphrasing) - the interplay between unity and plurality- the former as evidenced in literature and art as emphasizing a greater degree of commonality of perception about the nature and characteristics of the gods; the latter as evidenced by the inexhaustible local variations in the identities of various divinities as manifested local cult.

<sup>514</sup> Plurality (or pluralism) can be seen to encapsulate the whole range of what Broodbank (2000:10) refers to as 'a continuum between complete independence and complete integration with the outside world'. Davidson's (2009) views on oracles also encapsulate this pluralism: 'and that pluralism, a cosmic pluralism, a political pluralism, a geopolitical pluralism, the possibility of alternative readings and misreadings, of discretion, of exchange, of optimism and pessimism, of room for interpretation, is manifest in every word of every line of every (pagan) oracle ever uttered.' Davidson (2004) <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n23/davi02.html> [23/03/09].



In the next section, I consider how we could view this pluralism in terms of the following factors: the myths, gods and spirits, sea-crossings, the view from historiography, and Crete and Athens as 'parallel islands'.<sup>515</sup>

Drawing parallels with Crete, in another sense, can also be useful in terms of other Greece/Athens- city comparators in Euripides as well as in Greek tragedy, more generally. For example, we see that in Athenian tragedy, Thebes has an important role as a site (or mirror) on which problems affecting the polis could be displaced.<sup>516</sup> Thebes seems to represent the opposite to a well-governed city - and therefore can become an awful warning to Athenians that their self-image might be fragile.<sup>517</sup> In the case of the works explored in this study as part of Cretanism, this idea seems different from how Euripides deploys Crete, so it is worth asking how the treatment differs and with what effects. In considering the plays in terms of differences as well as commonalities, we can perhaps begin to explore a reverse side of the 'Self v the Other' paradigm, in terms of Greekness. So, we find that this approach makes Euripides' Crete good to think with, against and through these vexed questions of identity in fifth-century Athens.

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<sup>515</sup> See also Vlassopoulos 2013: 131-145 on intercultural communication in the Mediterranean in the ancient world, which offers an interesting model for comparison; there, plurality, construed in the context of 'practices of interlinking', was expressed not only through myths and cult, but also through guest-friendship, intermarriage, name-giving, diplomacy, commensality, and travel, labour and exchange.

<sup>516</sup> E.g. Eur. *Herakles*, *Children of Herakles*, *The Bacchae*, *Phoenician Women*; Aes. *Seven Against Thebes*

<sup>517</sup> See e.g. Zeitlin (1986) in Euben: 101-141

### 5.6.1 Myths and plurality

In this first section, I propose the idea that aspects of the Cretan myths contain within them elements that appear to normalize and sanction certain bizarre events on the island.<sup>518</sup> The same aspects of the myths that appear to create Crete's distinctness also contain within them features that suggest the opposite: a unity with Athens and the centre. The net effect of this process is to emphasize the links between 'Cretan' and 'Athenian' myths that in turn have the result of suggesting a unity that, rather than alienating Crete as a distant outpost, places the island at the heart of the Greek world. This can perhaps best be illustrated in the context of the myths of Europa, as well as the House of Minos.

Two related myths that have so far already received coverage in this study are, first, Zeus and Europa's journey from Europa to Crete; secondly, their union which produced three heroic sons including Minos, founder of the Cretan royal house.

In relation to the first element of the story, I suggest that Europa's journey from Phoenicia to Crete has the effect of linking Asia to Crete.<sup>519</sup> In the Euripidean plays,

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<sup>518</sup> Here, I broaden my discussion to consider the Cretan myths as generally represented; these include, of course, Euripides' versions of them. As stated in the beginning of the chapter, given the limiting nature of the fragmentary evidence available, the idea of myth in general (including material other than Euripides' works) has been used as extrapolation and to flesh out the evidence.

<sup>519</sup> This 'linking' could be perceived as going beyond the mere journey motif; I suggest here that it also has the effect of linking Phoenicia with Crete, and so, with the Greek world.

Europa's story acts as the starting point of the Cretan myths, given that it is Europa's arrival on Crete that results in the establishment of the House of Minos and the subsequent unfolding of the Cretan myths featured in Euripides. The sexual union that takes place between Europa and Zeus when they reach Crete is a significant event:<sup>520</sup> this is no ordinary god but the chief Olympian who carries out the kidnapping but who is also responsible for fathering by Europa 'three unmonstrous heroes of Crete', Minos, Rhadamanthys and Sarpedon.<sup>521</sup> Of the three sons, Minos in particular is important in the context of this study because the events surrounding his family include Pasiphae's and Phaedra's unnatural passions, the Minotaur, Poseidon's bull from the sea and Daedalus' fantastical inventions, all bizarre events and features. However, these bizarre events appear to be contrasted with the arrival of the Athenian hero, Theseus. The events associated with Theseus have the effect of linking Crete, the periphery, with the heart of the Greek world. Sequentially, these include Theseus' arrival on Crete and his vanquishing of both Minos and the 'bizarre' Minotaur, Phaedra's marriage to the future Athenian king, and the birth of their sons who themselves go on to become kings of Athens. These events are significant especially if they are considered in the context of the royal houses, as in the case of Phaedra, whose place in mythology is generally only contextualized in terms of Theseus and Hippolytus. Apart from Euripides' versions (of *Hippolytus*), Phaedra appears not to feature in other fifth-century mythological accounts of

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<sup>520</sup> See Robson 2002 (esp. 74-5) for the view that Zeus was the chief 'bestial' rapist.

<sup>521</sup> Buxton 2009: 160; see *The Cretans* f471.1 for a reference to this myth.

Athens.<sup>522</sup> So, Phaedra appears especially significant in terms of Crete, and of her role in strengthening Cretan-Athenian links.

In Theseus' case, as already suggested, the vanquishing of the Minotaur was one of the hero's greatest triumphs (along with the slaying of the Bull of Marathon, also believed to have a Cretan pedigree).<sup>523</sup> Mills suggests that Theseus' slaying of the Minotaur was not only his greatest victory; taken symbolically, Theseus is also seen as 'civilizer and benefactor' and the deed could be seen as the victory over dark, uncivilised forces by civilised, Athenian values.<sup>524</sup> In sailing to Crete and performing heroic deeds along the way, the Athenian hero is not only marking out the territory to which Athens could lay claim, he is also reinforcing the limits of Greek territory.<sup>525</sup> Part of Theseus' adventures on Crete involves the defeat of Minos who is shown to be a tyrant in his dealings both with the Athenian youths and Pasiphae, as well as with Theseus himself.<sup>526</sup> Here, Theseus as the champion of Athenian democracy can be seen to be overcoming Crete's oppressive tyranny. Theseus' defeat of Minos also reflects new-found Athenian supremacy as a sea power in the fifth-century in a way that Minos initially ruled the seas as the first thalassocrat.<sup>527</sup> So, overall, Theseus'

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<sup>522</sup> See Halleran 1995: 23 'Phaedra has virtually no mythology apart from her Cretan associations and the tale linking her with Hippolytus'. Interestingly, Sophocles also wrote a 'Phaedra' but the best known fifth-century versions of the Phaedra story appear to come from Euripides' versions; see also Gantz 1993: 285-8 (esp. 285).

<sup>523</sup> See Gantz 1993: 394-5; Mills 1997: 23 and n.90.

<sup>524</sup> So too for Herakles, of course; For Theseus, see Mills 1997:13, 19; also Plato *Phaedo* 58.10.

<sup>525</sup> See Mills 1997: 21.

<sup>526</sup> See Mills 1997: 18 and n. 69 cf. Plato *Minos* 320e; Strabo 10.4.1; Plutarch *Theseus* 16.3.

<sup>527</sup> Thuc. 1.4; Constantakopoulou 2007: 92, 94

role in the myths involving Minos, the Minotaur as well as Phaedra serves to sanction and normalize the bizarre Cretan events and to bring Crete within the norms of the civilized world. In this way, Euripides' depictions, through their references and allusions to the combat between Theseus and the Minotaur (in *Theseus*), appear to reinforce the notion of Athens' power and control over the Greek world; the latter, in turn, could suggest that Crete is being 'unified' with its hub.

### **5.6.2 Plurality and the gods**

One feature pertaining to religion and gods that surfaces in this study is the emphasis on Cretan gods and spirits whose powers of influence apply equally in the Greek centre as they do on Crete. At least two features of Euripides' 'Cretan plays' considered so far reinforce the notion of a commonality of perceptions about the nature and characteristics of the gods. First, gods and spirits invoked in the plays appear to be doubly recognisable, both as Cretan as well as Athenian/mainstream Greek gods. We noted earlier the invocation of cultic names of gods and spirits famously associated with Crete that also appear in non-Cretan (that is, Troezenian or Athenian) contexts. Next, the corollary to this feature is the appearance of more 'mainstream' gods on Crete without any particularly Cretan pedigree but who are renowned both in Athens and in the Greek world in general. Both features combine to create a representation of Crete which reflects a more general, Greek commonality.

In Chapter 2, I highlighted the main goddesses and spirits that are invoked in *Hippolytus*. There, I suggested how one of their functions was to reiterate Phaedra's Cretan origins. In the context of the landscape of Troezen, I suggested that these gods and spirits were inextricably linked with that landscape; at the same time the features of the sea, the coast and mountains evoked in Troezen appear to share some striking similarities with their Cretan equivalents. In the context of those landscapes, the main goddesses and spirits discussed there were Artemis and Dictynna, Artemis' Cretan counterpart, as well as the Curetes and the Mountain Mother, Cretan spirits strongly associated with Zeus' Idaean and Dictean cult worship. Zeus is also invoked by Phaedra in *Hippolytus* as the 'father of my race' thus alluding back not only to the founding of the House of Minos which has its origins in the union of Zeus with Europa on Crete, (and as recalled in f472.1, *The Cretans*) but also to the god's birth on that island. Zeus' prominent position in the pantheon of Hellenic gods would likewise serve to act as a religious unifier between Athens and Crete, given the god's importance in both regions. Zeus' presence on Crete is also significant in another way. As Williams suggests, '[i]n Greek mythology, ... it was traditional to view the pre-Zeus era as violent and wild, and the ascension of Zeus through the overthrow of the Titans as part of a gradual evolutionary progression.'<sup>528</sup> So, the island as the birth-place and traditional

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<sup>528</sup> See Williams 1991: 102 and n. 54, cf. Hesiod *Theogony* 453-506; 617-720.

residence of Zeus makes Crete appear as the source (or, at least one source) of Greek religion. It can also be seen to share similar religious beliefs with Athens, which was seen to be at the heart of the Greek world. Through the auspices of Zeus, then, the island can be seen to have much in common with Athens.

In a similar way, we see that apart from Zeus who is invoked on Crete as well as on Troezen, other 'mainstream gods', mainly Poseidon, Apollo and Aphrodite, also operate on Crete. In Chapter 4, we saw references to Poseidon in the context of Pasiphae's trial before Minos at *The Cretans* f472e.23-5. Poseidon is referred to as a 'sea-god', his familiar and possibly most important role. As discussed in Chapter 2, we can perceive the blurring of the roles of the two goddesses, Aphrodite and her rival; both goddesses are invoked in relation to the land- and seascapes of Troezen. These 'scapes' bear striking similarities to those on Crete. Similarly, Aphrodite's role in Troezen also bears some correspondences with Artemis's Cretan counterpart, Dictynna. So, in this way, overlaps are seen in the respective goddesses' roles; Cretan and Troezen versions of the goddesses echo one another.

Similarly, we also see these and other mainstream gods being invoked elsewhere in the 'Cretan plays'. For example, it is possible that references to Aphrodite, Poseidon and Apollo can be found at f472c in the surviving fragments from *The Cretans*:

Κρήτης ἀπα[  
φόβος τὰ θεῖα τοῖσι σώφροσιν βροτῶν  
πολλή γὰρ .[  
ἐμοὶ δ...[

... of Crete ...The gods' actions are a terror (to the wise  
among men?). For in her greatness ... but to me ... .<sup>529</sup>

If this reference is to Aphrodite, it is in the context of the goddess aiding 'Poseidon's retribution by filling Pasiphae with desire for the bull.'<sup>530</sup> We know that Poseidon also plays a significant role in *Hippolytus*: he is referred to at least five times in that work, but most significantly for Crete, Poseidon is referred to as the god who is summoned to call up the terrible bull from the sea.<sup>531</sup> Reckford proposes that Aphrodite and Poseidon worked in collaboration, each from a motive of revenge, to produce a bull from the sea-foam in *Hippolytus*.<sup>532</sup> These gods also probably conspire against Minos in Euripides' fragmentary play, *The Cretans*. In both instances, the invocation of both Aphrodite and Poseidon again illustrate the deployment of these important gods in a Cretan context.

References to another 'important god', Apollo, occur at least twice in the surviving evidence from the 'Cretan plays'. This time, in *The Cretans* f472b, Apollo ('son of

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<sup>529</sup> Trans. Collard and Cropp 2008a: 545; see their note 1 on the possibility that these lines refer to Aphrodite, Poseidon and Apollo.

<sup>530</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 545 n.1.

<sup>531</sup> At lines 46, 889, 895, 1169, and 1411 (noting that at 889 and 895, references are in the context of the bull from the sea).

<sup>532</sup> See Reckford 1974: 321.



Leto'), Artemis ('daughter of a splendid father') and Poseidon (see below) all appear to be alluded to in the same passage:

1 νέμ[?]εσις ὅτ' ἐπιπνεῖ, 2 ]ος Λυκίας ἀπο, 3 Λα]τῶε  
παῖ, 4 ]ν ὦναξ, 5 ]. α μέλπων, 6 ]. ψ.ασε μέγαν,  
7 Δελ[?]φοις, 8 εὐπάτειρα

fr. 2 col. i: ...when (retribution?) blasts...from Lycia...,  
son of Leto! ...lord! ... singing ... great ... (at Delphi?)  
...daughter of a splendid father ...

As Collard and Cropp postulate, 'retribution' refers to the punishment of Minos' offence against Poseidon through the gods 'onslaught'.<sup>533</sup> So, it could be that the gods are acting here in unison against Minos (in the event, Pasiphae becomes the target). Elements of the sea and of erotic desire intertwine here where Poseidon and Aphrodite combine to inflict Pasiphae with 'unnatural desire'. Apollo is invoked in f472b.2-3 in the epithet 'Son of Leto, the Lycian' while it is likely that Artemis is also invoked in these lines as Zeus' daughter, Apollo's sister; their collective father, Zeus, was as we know, chief god of Crete and the Greek world. This fragment is therefore important as it contextualises these gods in terms of a Cretan setting.

Taking these gods and spirits, landscape, seascape, and protagonists together, I suggest that their deployment in Euripides' works creates a perception of commonalities of religion between Crete and the rest of the Greek world. We have

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<sup>533</sup> Collard and Cropp 2008a: 541 n. 1.

seen that the 'main gods' of the Greek world, Zeus, Poseidon, Aphrodite, Artemis and Apollo, also operate on Crete as they would anywhere else, in roles that would certainly be recognised by a fifth-century Athenian spectator. Likewise, the 'regional variations' that I have considered so far, namely the Zeus cults and Artemis-Dictynna together with mountain gods and spirits, are invoked in ways so as to make them 'quasi-Athenian', a process which retains their Cretan variations while being recognisably mainstream. It is possible then, that the Athenian spectator would have 'processed' the elements familiar to them to contextualise the differences that Euripides' Crete appeared to present, and in this way, made sense of the whole. The overall effect could be to suggest links between Cretan practices and Athenian ones through agencies familiar to the Athenian spectator – namely gods, spirits and religious practices.

### **5.6.3 Sea-crossings - reinforcing ties between Crete and the rest of the Greek world**

The various sea-crossings undertaken by the protagonists of the 'Cretan plays' serve to emphasize two notions that are separate but linked: first, that they could stand as a metaphor for distance and separation of Crete from other parts of the Greek and non-Greek worlds, such as Phoenicia.<sup>534</sup> The notion of Crete's location as distant from Athens emphasises its otherness as an 'island'. Characters arrive on the island

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<sup>534</sup> Significant in this context as the land of Europa's provenance.

after suffering great personal danger, adventures and travelling long distances.<sup>535</sup> As previously suggested, long sea journeys are implied as these characters also often then either sail back to the Greek mainland, to Athens or to other parts of the Greek world.

Secondly, a contrary interpretation of these readings is that these sailings at the same time enhance the notion of 'islands' suggesting interconnectivity, interaction and integration with the rest of the Greek world.<sup>536</sup> As we will see in the context of a passage from *Theseus* describing the Athenian's presence on the island, the act of the hero's arrival on Crete serves to metaphorically 'connect' the island to the city of the hero's provenance, Athens. Theseus' role in this context could be compared to Odysseus' and other heroes', whose travels Malkin describes as 'exploring the Greek world, articulating and mediating cultural and ethnic encounters.'<sup>537</sup> Viewed in this light, Theseus' contacts with and 'exploration' of Crete suggests that it is being brought within a familiar territory known to fifth-century Athens, in other words, closer to the centre.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>535</sup> This idea is evident from epic onwards; see Odysseus' and other characters journeys to and from Crete e.g. *Od.* 3.291-310, 14.293-310, 14.378-383, 19.185-9.

<sup>536</sup> See also Constantakopoulou 2007: 2.

<sup>537</sup> See Malkin 1998: 9.

<sup>538</sup> See Malkin 1998:232 for an interesting comparison in terms of the 'ritual action' of return of Theseus' bones to Athens, discussed in the context of territorial expansion.

Cataloguing the journeys of the various protagonists provides some insights into the extent of the Greek world traversed by them; apart from Crete, the regions covered include Troezen, Sicily, Argos, and Corinth, as follows:<sup>539</sup>

1. Europa: the Phoenician princess' journey from her home to Crete is referred to in *The Cretans* f472.1 and in f752g.19-26 of *Hypsipyle*. Here, as discussed earlier, a connection is forged between Asia (as represented by Phoenicia) and the Greek world (specifically Crete) brought about through the agencies of Zeus.
2. Minos: was one-time king of Athens; during his kingship there he establishes the arrangement for human tribute to be sent to him in Crete. Some accounts from the myths have him personally journeying to Athens to pick out the youths and maidens that were to form the tribute.<sup>540</sup> His journeys reinforce the links (including political ties) between Crete and Athens.
3. Theseus: who journeys from Athens to Crete (and is dramatised in *Theseus*) and then returns to Athens via Dia (or Naxos). Theseus' travels can be seen to metaphorically 'link' Athens and Crete.<sup>541</sup> Theseus' journeys are considered in greater detail below.

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<sup>539</sup> Here, I broaden my discussion to consider the Cretan myths as generally represented in different sources; these include, of course, Euripides' versions of them (which are specified).

<sup>540</sup> Bacchylides Dithyramb 17

<sup>541</sup> See Malkin 1994: 6 'The superimposition of myth onto the geography of settlement usually involved changing the time frame of the myth or, more exactly, connecting the myth with a concrete time and place.'

4. Phaedra: the Cretan princess journeys from Crete to Troezen via Athens (in *Hippolytus*), upon her marriage to Theseus. The effects of her journeys – both political and metaphorical – were discussed in Chapter 2.
5. Daedalus: the master-builder is an Athenian in exile who first flees to Crete and finds employment there in the court of Minos (in *The Cretans*); he is responsible for the construction of Pasiphae's cow and the Minotaur's Labyrinth. Different versions from the myths tell us that the architect incurs the wrath of Minos, and then flees the Cretan king by escaping to Sicily. Minos then travels to Sicily in pursuit of Daedalus; the king meets his death there. Singly and jointly the journeys of Daedalus and Minos have the effect of metaphorically establishing (or reinforcing) connections between Athens, Crete and Sicily.<sup>542</sup>
6. In *Polyidus*, the seer Polyidus is summoned by Minos from his home in Corinth. After restoring life to Minos' son, Glaucus then returns to Corinth; so a forging of links between Crete and Corinth may be discerned from this work.
7. In the Euripidean fragment *Cretan Women*, it is possible that the plot involves a journey from Argos by Atreus, Thyestes and Nauplius who travel to the court of Cretan king Catreus and his daughter, Aerope.<sup>543</sup> In this work, Argos and Crete could be seen to be linked by their journeys.

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<sup>542</sup> See Antonaccio 2001: 122-3 on Daedalus, Minos and the mythology of ethnicity including the connections forged between Crete and Sicily; also see Malkin 1998: 219, 232.

<sup>543</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 516-9.

Generally, the journeys of the various protagonists appear to promote a notion that is the opposite to that of an isolated, distant Crete: they suggest instead that Crete was part of the network of 'islands' indicating interconnectivity, interaction, and integration with the rest of the Greek world, including Athens. The following passage from *Theseus* f382 describing the Athenian hero's arrival on the island, highlights such connections:

#### ΠΟΙΜΗΝ

ἐγὼ πέφυκα γραμμάτων μὲν οὐκ ἴδρις,  
μορφὰς δὲ λέξω καὶ σαφῇ τεκμήρια.  
κύκλος τις ὥς τόρνοισιν ἐκμετρούμενος,  
οὗτος δ' ἔχει σημείον ἐν μέσῳ σαφές·  
τὸ δεύτερον δὲ πρῶτα μὲν γραμμαὶ δύο, 5  
ταύτας διείργει δ' ἐν μέσαις ἄλλη μία·  
τρίτον δὲ βόστρυχός τις ὥς εἰλιγμένος·  
τὸ δ' αὖ τέταρον ἢ μὲν εἰς ὀρθὸν μία,  
λοξαὶ δ' ἐπ' αὐτῆς τρεῖς κατεστηριγμέναι  
εἰσὶν· τὸ πέμπτον δ' οὐκ ἐν εὐμαρεῖ φράσαι· 10  
γραμμαὶ γάρ εἰσιν ἐκ διεστώτων δύο,  
αὗται δὲ συντρέχουσιν εἰς μίαν βάσιν·  
τὸ λοίσθιον δὲ τῷ τρίτῳ προσεμφερές.

#### HERDSMAN:

I am not acquainted with letters, but will tell you their shapes and identify them clearly: a circle such as is measured out with compasses, that has in its centre a conspicuous mark; The second, first of all a pair of lines, and another one holding these apart at their middles; third, something like a curly lock of hair, and then the fourth has one part sitting upright, and three more that are fastened crosswise on it; the fifth is not an easy one to explain – there are two lines that begin from separate points, and these run

together into a single base; and the last of all is similar to the third.<sup>544</sup>

First, the illiteracy of the Cretan herdsman is evident from his self-proclamation in line 1: a non-‘acquaintance with letters’, the opposite being a mark of the educated. This emphasis could be seen to contrast him and Theseus (whose boat with his name inscribed announces his arrival). The contrast could possibly also suggest a juxtaposition between Crete, the island at the ‘very fringes’ (f381, *Theseus*) and the ‘normal’ civilized world of Athens.<sup>545</sup> Secondly, taking passages f381 and f382 together we see suggestions of Athens’ control over Crete (and every part of the Empire) as represented by Theseus’ grand arrival.<sup>546</sup> Once there, we know that the hero will vanquish the Minotaur, trounce Minos in various contests involving wit, bravura and physical strength, and return to Athens triumphant. Implied in this dynamic of the display of Athenian might is also the city’s superiority as a sea-power over Crete which formerly held this position. Theseus’ journeys to Crete and other places suggest the extension of Athenian power to every corner of the Greek world, including this island ‘on the very fringes’. As Mills’ commentary on Thucydides’ account of Pericles’ funeral speech renders:

‘Theseus will go to a dangerous land not his own (i.e. Crete), but, he will make it his own’:

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<sup>544</sup> See Collard and Cropp 2008a: 421 n.1 ‘The letters spell Theseus’ name (ΘΗΣΕΥΣ), perhaps seen on his ship as it approached the Cretan shore.’ Athenaeus 10.454b says that the description was imitated by Agathon (*TrGF* 39 F 4) and Theodectus (*TrGF* 72 F 6); Mills 1997: 252 n. 102 cf. Webster 1967: 106-7 further suggests that Theseus’ name could have been inscribed on his famous sword (used to slay the Minotaur, by some accounts).

<sup>545</sup> See Mills 1997: 252.

<sup>546</sup> f381, considered previously, describes Crete’s location on the fringes of Europe.

πασαν μὲν θάλασσαν καὶ γῆν ἐσβατὸν τῇ  
ἡμετέρᾳ τόλμῃ καταναγκάσαντες γενέσθαι

by our daring, making every land and sea accessible.<sup>547</sup>

Viewing the play in terms of fifth-century rhetoric, we perhaps gain insights into the extent to which Theseus' exploits were generally used as an analogy of Athenian imperial expansion as seen in the example of Crete. Although Minos was said to be the Greeks' first naval commander (according to Thucydides, in any case),<sup>548</sup> Theseus' eventual defeat of the Cretan ruler signalled the ensuing supremacy of Athenian naval power over Crete. In this sense, *Theseus* could have been a conventional story, given that the hero's triumph in Crete is 'the model for so many of his subsequent exploits, in which he comes from afar to assert himself as he restores order, a pattern which has analogies with Athenian imperial expansionism.'<sup>549</sup> Theseus' arrival on a ship also alludes to his perceived standing in fifth-century Athens as 'archetypal representative of ordinary Athenians, "the people, the oarsmen, the saviours of our city".'<sup>550</sup>

Finally, it is striking that even though the herdsman proclaims his illiteracy, the language he uses is highly descriptive and poetic. I propose that this dramatic language serves to proclaim and emphasize the name 'Theseus' in a deliberate way

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<sup>547</sup> See Mills 1997: 252-3 cf. Thuc. 2.41.4.

<sup>548</sup> Thuc. 1.4.1-2

<sup>549</sup> See Mills 1997: 252.

<sup>550</sup> See Walker 1995: 94 and n. 68 cf. Aristophanes *Acharnians* 161-2.



which the spelling out the letters singly in this manner would achieve. One effect of the herdsman's proclamations would plausibly be to emphasize the high status accorded to this mythical figure (who was commandeered by fifth-century Athenians to become one of their greatest heroes). So, the effect that the herdsman's speech would have had on the spectators could have been profound: a great Athenian hero arrives on a far-off outpost to proclaim his importance; Crete will never be the same again.<sup>551</sup>

In sum, the play *Theseus* on the one hand highlights a perceived difference between Athens and Crete as illustrated by the hero's travels from the heart of the civilized world to one of its extremities where he confronts the fearsome Minotaur. Theseus arrives on the island (f381-2), exerts his might and vanquishes his foes (f386b-c) and in so doing, restores Athenian order and values (alluded to in f388) before leaving the island.

Theseus' journeys to and from Crete could be said to mark the island out as not an 'other', unknown, foreign place, but very much part of the Greek world, renowned from epic onwards as the 'first civilization'.<sup>552</sup> Haft (1981) quotes Finley who asserts that a Greek of the fifth century would have regarded the Cretan civilization as a

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<sup>551</sup> One effect of the emphasis on the written word in this context is to highlight the bringing of the culture of (Athenian) writing to Crete where the former is perceived (by an Athenian audience) to be culturally and technologically more advanced in the fifth century (while acknowledging Knossos' greatness as the 'first civilization' from myth history).

<sup>552</sup> *Od.* 19.173-9.

‘Greek civilization essentially like his own, only brighter, richer, greater.’<sup>553</sup> So, while there is a definite separation (illustrated, e.g., in f382 in terms of physical distance and a civilized/savage divide) between Athens and Crete, Theseus’ journeys to and from the island also serve to unite the two regions. It will be recalled that it is Theseus’ journey to Crete that results in the hero’s subsequent marriage to the Cretan princess, Phaedra, as they rule over Troezen. Their marriage produces two sons who go on to rule as kings of Athens.<sup>554</sup> So, in this way, if the two regions could be perceived as being linked, then Crete could take its place at the very heart of Athens’ own myth-history.

#### **5.6.4 Crete and historiography**

In addition to the Cretan connections with the rest of the Greek world which are discerned from Euripidean tragedy, Herodotus’ and Thucydides’ versions also reinforce this cohesion in different ways: first, Herodotus 1.2 suggests that Europe, of which the Greek world is part, also clearly includes Crete. The other noteworthy reference in Thucydides 1.4 on the Greek world’s sea-power suggests that Minos was its first naval commander. This view is couched in terms that suggest that Minos’ kingdom, Crete, is very much part of the ‘Aegean Sea’ which the historian includes as part of the Greek world. So, the perspectives from historiography of Crete’s place within the Greek world appear to reinforce Euripides’ portrayals of a

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<sup>553</sup> See Haft 1981:2-3 cf. Finley 1969:10.

<sup>554</sup> See Miller 2005: 83 n. 78 for a discussion on Phaedra and Theseus’ sons; see also Gantz 1993: 283-4.

Crete with ties with Athens and the rest of Greece. The various sailings of the protagonists to and from Crete have the effect of reinforcing this perspective.

Historiographical records also suggest another related perspective of Crete and Athens as 'parallel islands'; this idea of parallels between the two places stressing commonality can also be usefully considered as part of another aspect of the insularity model – how islands were perceived. Islands were widely defined, and encompassed both 'material islands' such as Crete, that is, a piece of land surrounded entirely by water to 'perceived islands' that include the virtual island of the Athenian polis, surrounded by walls.<sup>555</sup> As Constantakopoulou discusses, Athens was made into an island by digging through the isthmus, and fortifying it with the Long Walls - that is, materially creating 'an island' out of a former peninsula.<sup>556</sup> While Crete was an island, both material and perceived, Athens 'became' an island. Both 'islands' shared a commonality, construed as follows: each turned to the sea – it was the sea that played a significant role in forging their identities. As we have seen from Euripidean drama, the many and varied references to the sea and sea-crossings show how Crete and the oceans around it were perceived to be inextricably linked. Crete was also known as a thalassocracy from the ancient world. In the case of the Athens (which 'became' the island) many

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<sup>555</sup> See Broodbank 2000: 16; See also Constantakopoulou 2007: Ch. 5 on 'The island of Athens'. Also, Thucydides records Pericles' war strategy to regard Athens as an island (Thuc. 1.143 'we must try and think of ourselves as islanders...').

<sup>556</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 151-2.

scholars have noted that it adopted the rhetoric of insularity in order to draw parallels between itself and an island,<sup>557</sup> turning its focus away from the hinterland towards the sea.<sup>558</sup> The parallels between the two ‘islands’ of Crete and Athens can also be considered in terms of their role as sea powers. Athens was *the* sea power of the fifth century and saw itself as such.<sup>559</sup> Crete, on the other hand, was perceived (by Athens) to be a previous holder of that title, as a thalassocracy from the ancient Greek world. As noted earlier from Thucydides 1.4, Minos was commonly held to be its first naval commander. So, taking the various perspectives together of how Crete and Athens might have been perceived, it is plausible to suggest that Athens saw itself as an island, if not modelled after Crete to some extent, then at least sharing some commonality with it, drawn from myth-history.<sup>560</sup>

Plato’s version of a Cretan city draws parallels between it and the city of Athens; each is perceived as an ‘island’ in different ways.<sup>561</sup> In Plato’s *Laws*, we find evidence of similarities between Minos and Athens; Minos’ thalassocracy and his collection of tribute from the Athenians (articulated in terms of youths and maidens brought back

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<sup>557</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 153 cf. Braudel 2001:265 (see also n.66).

<sup>558</sup> Hdt. 8.60-3

<sup>559</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 139.

<sup>560</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007:90 the ‘reality (of Athenian sea power under the Empire) influenced the way in which older and mythical thalassocracies were portrayed in the fifth century.’ (my parenthesis); also (ibid) p.92 ‘(...) Thucydides’ analysis of thalassocracies (...) sits well within the context of Athenian attempts to appear as natural successors of a long series of historical thalassocrats in the Aegean area.’ Crete was one such ‘mythical thalassocracy’.

<sup>561</sup> See Morrow 1960 for an interpretation of the *Laws* and esp. pp. 17-35 for a comprehensive account of ‘why Crete mattered to Plato’. See also Constantakopoulou 2007:91-7 on why Crete was crucial from a historical perspective to the development of Athens as a naval power cf. Thucydides 1.4; Herodotus 1.171-2; ‘the present shaped the past’ (...). The most striking example of such a conceptualization of the past is the depiction of the Minoan thalassocracy in fifth-century sources.’ (ibid: 94)

to Crete as fodder for the Minotaur) are compared to the similar practices of imperial Athens.<sup>562</sup> Aristotle takes this notion further by suggesting in his *Politics* that Minos' thalassocracy was the direct result of Crete's central position in the Mediterranean – a role that Athens in the fifth century portrayed itself as playing, at least in terms of trade and commerce.<sup>563</sup> Another significant parallel based on the stories of Minos and Daedalus alluded to in *The Cretans* is Minos' pursuit of the latter to Sicily (discussed previously).<sup>564</sup> The story is preserved in Herodotus (and Diodorus) and tells of a Cretan expedition to Sicily so that Cretans could avenge the murder of Minos; a subsequent retelling of the story has Minos himself leading the expedition, thus paralleling the Athenian-Sicilian expedition and Minos' expedition closely.<sup>565</sup> These notions of correspondence, offered from historiographical and philosophical discourses, suggest insights into how perceptions of Euripides' Crete by Athenians could have been construed more in terms of commonalities between island and the mainland; these in turn emphasize the idea of interaction and interconnectivity over alienation and difference.

#### 5.6.5 Athens-Crete and the rest of the Greek world: the dynamics

I have so far considered the relationships - and some possible interpretations - between Greece/Athens and Crete in terms of unity and plurality. It is not,

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<sup>562</sup> Plato *Laws* 706a

<sup>563</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 1271b 3-45; Thuc 2.38.2; Old Oligarch 2.12

<sup>564</sup> See Antonaccio 2001:122-3.

<sup>565</sup> Hdt. 7.170; Diodorus 4.79.1; see also Constantakopoulou 2007:96-7 and (ibid.) notes 22 and 23.

however, being suggested that such relationships are in some way unique to Crete in Euripidean tragedy. Far from it, we are aware that the social fabric of Athens – the city which Euripides inhabited- was heterogeneous comprising citizens, non-Athenian metics and slaves, many of whom hailed from and travelled to and from the Balkans, the Black Sea, Asia and Africa. This multi-ethnic pluralism finds expression in the settings and stories of Euripidean tragedy: from Egyptians in *Helen*, Corinthians and barbarians in *Medea*, to Amazons in *Hippolytus*. Such regional variations can also be found in the works set on Sicily, Thebes, the Troad or Attica, so, taken together, it becomes obvious that the setting on Crete of the works covered by this study is by no means unique. However, what can possibly be observed is that each work perhaps emphasises a variation in the relationship of each region with Athens, and serves, at some level, to compare and contrast each with the centre.<sup>566</sup>

## 5.7 Salient Features of Insularity

In this chapter, I have considered the model of insularity from two broad perspectives in the context of Euripidean drama: one which emphasizes Crete's distinctness and alienation from Athens, the other, which emphasizes instead a commonality and unity between the island and the mainland. These discussions

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<sup>566</sup> Given that the works were first performed in Athens at a festival celebrating Athenian group identity, revealing an Athenocentrism, manifested in its praise for the beauty of the city's environment, the grace of its citizens, its cultural distinction, and the fairness of its courts (e.g. see *Medea* 824-45; *Hipp.* 423, 760; *Electra* 1258-63 etc.)

have been focussed around how Crete's location and distance from Athens appear first to be emphasized in terms of particular features of its land- and seascapes.

Next, I considered three specific aspects of bovine imagery that are evoked in the 'Cretan plays': the Minotaur, the bull from the sea and the colour-changing calf, which both taken singly and together appear yet again to stress Crete's strange nature. These bizarre creatures and associated events seem to emerge from the protagonists' interactions with the sea- and landscapes.

In the course of my discussions, one feature that became apparent was a contrary view to a notion of insularity which stressed distance, difference and alienation.

This other perspective appeared instead to reveal commonalities between Crete and the mainland (including Athens). Commonalities in the Euripidean representations include common myths and gods as well as sea-crossings to and from Crete; perspectives from historiographical and philosophical models appear to reinforce these commonalities between the two regions. In sum, in Euripides' 'Cretan plays' the two perspectives of insularity-alienation and interconnectivity appear to enter into a dialogue. Such a dialogue can be fruitfully viewed in terms of the bundle of complexities involved in the perception and representation of Crete as an island in Euripides' selected plays. Characters and events appear to reinforce a continuum 'between complete independence and complete integration with the outside

world'.<sup>567</sup> Indeed, as will be further explored in the concluding Chapter 6, Broodbank's application of the 'continuum theory', based on the study of island archaeology, could be usefully deployed here to offer insights into the notion of a dialogue between the two 'extremes' of complete independence and complete integration which the Cretan-Athenian relationship appears to variously display.<sup>568</sup> In terms of dramatic models, both 'extremes' obviously have their place in heightening tension and putting particular perspectives under scrutiny by way of the action, events and characters' responses in the plays. Broodbank suggests that islands in general have a propensity to move in either direction between independence and integration under 'people's volition or under compulsion'.<sup>569</sup> I suggest a different perspective in terms of Euripidean drama – that the poet offers both 'terminals' simultaneously, each manifesting itself at various points in the continuum to emphasize either difference or integration. Ultimately, the performance of the plays in Athenian civic space appears to bring these notions together in that Crete can be brought 'home' to Athens, at least metaphorically speaking, on stage. Given the background of commonalities that are stressed between these two 'islands of sorts', the Athenian audience, perhaps familiar with those commonalities, can view the dynamic between them and the Cretan islanders in their own terms. Athens may be at the heart of a vast empire and part of an extensive network of communications with the rest of the Greek (and the wider)

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<sup>567</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 2; Broodbank 2000:10.

<sup>568</sup> See Broodbank 2000:10.

<sup>569</sup> *ibid*



world, but it shares much with that distant island. Crete, 'the other', appears to be part of 'the self'. Ariadne's thread binds not just the Minotaur, the bulls, Minos and Pasiphae to Crete, but Theseus, by his journey to the island and back to Athens, has also bound the island firmly to the very heart of the Greek world.

In the concluding Chapter 6, I consider the dynamics of difference and integration in terms of the findings in Chapters 2 to 5, and in the context of fifth-century perceptions of insularity.

## Chapter 6:

### A multi-faceted Crete

#### 6.1 Introduction and Overview

In this final chapter, I first summarize the main findings from Chapters 2 to 5, demonstrating how each chapter has contributed to investigations of the research questions set out in Section 1.2 of Chapter 1. I then explain how my findings map and inform the fifth-century island-mainland paradigm that emerges from Euripides' 'Cretan plays'. Finally, I situate this research in relation to key issues in fifth-century thought.

I started in Chapter 1 by considering the research questions through which I would analyse how Crete is represented in Euripides' 'Cretan plays'. Next, I discussed how consistent such representations are between the various works; following this, I reflected on how the Cretan myths and mythological characters are deployed in each of these works.<sup>570</sup> I then outlined some of the ways in which previous representations of Crete in literature have been reformulated in Euripides. I addressed aspects of Cretan and Athenian identities by considering how they appear in key passages, e.g., modes of address (including epithets), their expressions of self-

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<sup>570</sup> Phaedra and Theseus are considered in Chapter 2; Chapter 3 analyses the characters of Minos, Pasiphae and the Minotaur. Chapter 4 considers Theseus' adventures in Crete. Chapter 5's discussions move from text-centred analysis to the discussions of over-arching ideas of the study.

identity and how characters viewed their Cretan nature. I then considered how the general representations of Crete as an island appear to articulate some wider issues about the different and complex layers of relationships between the islands of the Greek world and Athens. These questions will be considered further in this chapter (in Section 6.3). My proposition is that there is not just one kind of 'mainland' or 'island' as far as the Greek world is concerned; rather, these are fluid concepts which appear to vary, depending on the context. In Chapter 1, I also outlined broader questions that the thesis would address in relation to notions of identity, especially the key issue of the relationship between polarities and multiple identities, the former indicating opposition, the latter indicating multiple spheres of reference, aspects which has been important in my analysis of modern scholarship.

In Chapter 2, I discussed the representation of Phaedra's 'Cretan-ness' in terms of the evocation of the physical landscapes, the sea, and gods and spirits that re-create the island of the princess' origins – but in Troezen. So, for example, Cretan spirits are invoked on Troezen; these spirits also appear as a theme in Euripides' fragmentary work, *The Cretans*. The goddess Dictynna is represented as being connected to Crete, too: in *Hippolytus*, Euripides invokes her as the Cretan version of Artemis. I also identified the importance of lakes, sand, beaches and eddies-locations on the edge of both land and water which were treated as part of the marginal landscape in *Hippolytus*. This marginal nature of the physical landscape appears to mirror the extraordinary events which unfold in that work. Euripides'

construct of Cretanism includes another striking feature: the mirroring of marginal landscapes and states of mind.<sup>571</sup> It also shows how liminality can infiltrate both landscape and human behaviour. This marginal nature of the physical landscape mirrors the extraordinary events and behaviour which unfold in *Hippolytus*. Crete appears as a marginal zone between land and water where unusual events unfold in quick succession. Phaedra and Pasiphae are Cretan characters who appear to mirror this marginality in their behaviour. Euripides' construct of Cretan-ness offers insights into this aspect of mirroring of marginal landscapes and states of mind, suggesting how both landscape and human behaviour can impact on one another.

The imagery in *Hippolytus* associated with Crete also emerges as a notable feature of Cretanism. The way in which the sea is invoked, using graphic nautical imagery, appears to reinforce more popular fifth-century Athenian notions of Crete in terms of its myth-historical fame as a sea-faring nation. Bovine imagery, a familiar Cretan theme from myth, is an important element in *Hippolytus*. The poet also uses particular ideas associated with the bull, the cow and the Minotaur repeatedly in his representation of Cretanism in various other works, as seen in Chapters 4 and 5. So, the image of Crete is associated with the evocation of animals and strange beasts.

Although the language of *Hippolytus* points to differences in identity between

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<sup>571</sup> See Chapter 1: the term 'Cretanism' is used throughout the thesis as an adjective encompassing the various characteristics and attributes that appear to be associated with the island of Crete, and its characters from myth.

‘Troezenian’ and ‘Cretan’, equated to difference and separation, the same idea also alludes to the strengthening of ties between Crete and Troezen, that is, between the island and a region on the mainland. This example of dual associations of separation and close ties also expresses itself in other ways through the sometimes-challenging dynamics of unities and polarities.

An overarching idea that emerges from a study of individual themes from passages discussed in detail in Chapter 2 is the notion of the interplay between unity and plurality. When considered in the context of all the ‘Cretan plays’, unity was taken to refer to a wider notion of ‘a greater degree of panhellenic commonality of perception’ reflecting a sharing of myths, gods and spirits, religious practices and of responses to characters and ideas from various parts of the Greek world.<sup>572</sup> Each of these elements, both singly and in combination, contains ideas which can be seen to unite the island with the mainland. Plurality, on the other hand, is seen to be evidenced by the presence of gods and spirits who appear to have a Cretan provenance but whose equivalents also appear on the mainland; so, for example, in *Hippolytus*, we saw how Artemis’ Cretan equivalent, Dictynna, and other Cretan spirits were evoked in Troezen. These gods and spirits, then, serve to emphasize both unity and plurality as seen in the regions of the Greek world identified in the

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<sup>572</sup> Following Buxton’s 2009: 157 perspectives on Greek religion and religious practices. What is not being suggested here, however, is any kind of ‘model’ of Greek religion and religious practices (see e.g. Kindt 2012 and the emphasis on plurality, which does, however, offer interesting insights).

play. Taking the notions of unity and plurality together, themes that are initially seen as particularly Cretan, when considered in a wider context, become concerns or characteristics that also apply to Troezen, Athens, as well as Crete. As discussed in Chapter 5, in considering the plays in terms of differences as well as commonalities, we can perhaps begin to explore a reverse side of the 'Self v the Other' paradigm, in terms of Greekness. In Euripides' works, the questions pertaining to identity appear sometimes to be articulated in terms of the poet's constructed versions of locales of Greece. Here, certain themes are explored through an interplay between place and paradigms. Examples include constructions of the Athenian citizen and the barbarian, including the subtle variations in between, articulated, e.g. through otherness, women lacking sexual self-control, the gods' indifference to man etc. So, whereas Thebes in tragedy is often depicted as the city constantly under siege<sup>573</sup>, Crete in tragedy becomes a site for exploration of how the women's lack of sexual self-control result in the displacement of their societal status quo. In the case of the Thebes, the geographical locale and its treatment is a recurring theme evoking a sense of the self and the other in terms of similarity/attraction and difference/repulsion.<sup>574</sup> Crete plays an analogous (though not the same) role in Euripidean tragedy.<sup>575</sup> In the case of Crete, any rigid notions of Athenian polarities

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<sup>573</sup> E.g. in Eur. *Herakles*, *Children of Herakles*, *The Bacchae*

<sup>574</sup> It is interesting to note that the Thebes in Sophocles is where the 'other side of the polis' is considered (e.g. in *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Antigone*). In Euripides, Thebes as a place mutates into a more identity/conceptually-based idea of Greek/other/barbarian (as in the *Bacchae*). Euripides appears to take this question further in the case of Crete, thinking about identity and challenging the notion of Greekness in yet more different ways.

<sup>575</sup> See Zeitlin 1986: 102, 117

appear to be challenged, and become more nuanced in terms of their antinomies. For example, the polarities observed in the plays of Euripides I have discussed can be interpreted as pointing not just to differences between male and female but also to a subtler interpretation of a certain kind of woman- transgressive, sexually unbridled, yet a queen who by her actions (which include the committing of bestiality), makes us, the audience, question our own morality, including its limits. This is a perspective that raises a whole host of questions including what it is that separates the passions and emotions of a human from that of an animal, or indeed, a half-human. I have also considered the possibility of how such moral questions might be equally applicable to an Athenian audience as for the protagonists on stage. In this way, Crete-with all its apparently warped morals- is 'brought home' to Athens; its distance or insular nature being no barrier against this kind of infiltration. Phaedra, for example, is both a queen and mother to future kings of Athens, as well as being sexually debauched, with questionable morals. So, we find that these kinds of contradictions being reflected in the unity *v* plurality approach, making Euripides' Crete good to think with, against and through these vexed questions of identity in fifth-century Athens concerning Greek/Other, as set out in other works by playwrights of the age.<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>576</sup> E.g. Aeschylus *The Persians* and Sophocles *Oedipus* trilogy ask different questions on this theme.

In Chapter 3, I considered the notion that Euripides was possibly using other characterisations of Crete (e.g. the island as home to the Minotaur) as a basis for works such as the fragmentary play, *The Cretans*. Descriptions contained in the work appear to offer intriguing insights of a kind of ‘imagined reality’ of a temple. So, literary syncretism could be seen to be a device the poet appears to be drawing upon, combining particular elements based on Athenian perceptions of Crete, including its material features, with other less familiar (and including possibly invented) elements. References to features such as the Cretan temple and detailed descriptions of the wood used in the ceiling’s construction were examples of devices used by the poet to position the Crete of the play in a contemporary, fifth-century Athenian context, adding a sense of contemporary ‘authenticity’ to the mythical story. The poet appears to be using contemporary events and frameworks of reference to create allusions to lived experiences of the fifth century. The Crete of *The Cretans* seems to be constructed as a fusion: it is posited in a lived Athenian time and place; one formulated from a perspective which is recognizably Athenian – and yet at the same time, it is different, distant and mysterious.

From Chapter 4, two main aspects of Cretanism emerged: first, the use of bovine imagery, and the significance of animals, and animal-like beings- in terms of a triadic relationship between gods, humans and beasts, and a relationship in which



gods and beasts were used to make sense of what it was to be human.<sup>577</sup> Secondly, the plays construct a 'Crete of extremes': the island prompts the protagonists to respond to events in particular ways and with a certain intensity, resulting in natural laws being turned on their heads. Each of these aspects of Cretanism was considered in terms of gods, humans and monsters, and a Crete *in extremis*.

Analyses of the various uses of bovine imagery from the Cretan cycle of myths suggested a multiple nature of the themes. In *The Cretans*, this appears as an important ingredient in the way Crete is perceived and represented.<sup>578</sup> The display of duality in the bovine, a facet of multiple identities, was discussed as part of the dynamic of 'the animal in man' and 'man in the animal'. The findings suggest that, rather than considering humans and animals as polar opposites, what appears to be contemplated here instead is an appraisal of what it takes to be human. In this schema, humans are not necessarily seen as being superior to animals, or indeed vice versa; perhaps, the case is being made for a more equal treatment of the two worlds.

This dynamic is not only between humans and animals; the gods also appear as part of this relationship. It also appears that this three-way dynamic between gods, humans and animals begins to become more nuanced and blurred in Euripides' works, given that animals and humans appear to behave like one another. In this

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<sup>577</sup> Following the conceptual models of Lloyd 2012 and Vernant (trans. Lloyd) 1980 (see also my earlier discussion in Chapter 4).

<sup>578</sup> See e.g. *The Cretans* f472b.29. 'Duality' with reference to this passage is discussed in Chapter 4

sense, the Minotaur is a prime example of a creature exhibiting a two-fold nature, displaying aspects of both human and animal; the model of the Minotaur appears to challenge any rigid status quo such as the triadic model of gods, humans and monsters, seen earlier in Chapter 4.<sup>579</sup> This 'twofold-nature' was considered in terms of explicit as well as implicit examples.

Given the findings so far from Chapters 2 to 5, key aspects that Euripides appears to be exploring in the 'Cretan plays' are first, one informed by the poet's implicit and explicit depictions of the Minotaur, in particular, and secondly, duality in a more fluid and dynamic sense. We see that such duality contains within it the seeds for a twofold, or indeed multiple, potential- the same creature being able to articulate polarities such as animal-human, hero-monster, victor-vanquished, active-passive lover etc. In this way, any rigid paradigms that make up the simple polarities such as man-woman, man-animal, Greek-barbarian, islander-mainlander, Cretan-Athenian etc. can be further nuanced through the notion of multiple identities.

In the 'Cretan plays' therefore, we see Euripides' deployment of bovine imagery as part of the imagery of Crete, used to articulate these nuanced perspectives of identity. It can be suggested that each of these pairs of polemics appear at first as the antithesis of the other, yet on closer examination are seen to contain within

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<sup>579</sup> See also e.g. Segal 1965: 145-148 on the significance of the Bull, the horses and other creatures in the context of the gods and the protagonists in *Hipp.*

themselves facets of the other where each displays traits of its antithesis. In this way, the notion of 'Self v Other' is rendered more complex, and one facet begins to merge into the other; so, while, like Thebes, Crete might begin by appearing to be the antithesis of Athens (where, in the former case, Athenian spectators are instructed through tragedy to 'refrain from imitating the other's negative example.'), in the latter case, it might appear inevitable to the same Athenian audience that the other might already be found within themselves.<sup>580</sup> So, what this study shows is that, in addition to investigating in more depth the question of Greek identity through the formulations of polarities contained within that notion, the poet's representations of Crete appears to extend and render more subtle and complex those same vexed questions by introducing an extra dimension- those of multiple identities, a character displaying multiple spheres of reference, which in addition to adding to the discussions on identity, also brings into question concerns on what it is to be human, and what is it that separates us from an animal.

In Chapter 5, on 'insularity', I set out the idea of an island such as Crete as a laboratory for experimentation particularly in ideas of spatial relationships. The theme of marginality, that is, one expressed in terms of Crete's location (both material and perceived), surrounded by water as well as being neither entirely land nor sea, provided rich material for consideration. I suggested that such

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<sup>580</sup> See Zeitlin 1986: 117, on Thebes

experimentation is most effective on a distant location such as Crete, being as far away (both physically and metaphorically) from Athens as possible, while remaining very much part of the Greek world.<sup>581</sup> The island was also seen to act as a kind of foil for Athens in the arguments explored in the preceding Chapter 4.

In Chapter 5, I also discussed the utility of existing scholarship. Broodbank's model of island archaeology was nuanced to consider Crete's treatment in drama;<sup>582</sup>

Broodbank's model views an island as being 'a continuum between complete independence and complete integration with the outside world'.<sup>583</sup> Although such a model is more appropriately applied to archaeological studies, it has nonetheless interesting outcomes when considered in terms of tragedy. As outlined in Chapter 1, it was found through textual analyses in subsequent chapters that theoretical models of interconnectivity could, to a certain extent, be brought into dialogue with tragedy, in order to provide possible new insights in the study of Athenian drama; in essence, that such theories are good to think with about Euripides' 'Cretan plays'.

In the case of Euripides' Crete, the poet's constructs start by appearing to scrutinize aspects of the island-mainland dynamic that highlight cultural differences between 'islands' such as Crete and Athens, a relationship which can be viewed in terms of

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<sup>581</sup> *Theseus* f381: 'Nearly on the very fringes of Europe', probably referring to Crete

<sup>582</sup> See e.g. Broodbank 2000: 10-11 on the usefulness as well as problems in the application of reticulate models in island contexts.

<sup>583</sup> Broodbank 2000: 10

Broodbank's model. Yet, ultimately, these concerns of civilized behaviour (bestiality, the birth of half-human monsters, illicit sexual desires etc.) appear to be as pertinent to Athenians themselves as to Cretans. It appears that Crete's physical separation from Athens is no barrier to cultural infiltration, with the result that metaphorically-speaking at least, Crete's presence can be felt in Athens. Let us next consider how this notion can be extended to include the dynamics of 'island' *v.* 'mainland'.

## **6.2 Insularity and the background from historiography**

In this section, I expand on ideas articulated earlier in the thesis about one aspect of insularity: the dynamics of the centre (Athens) and the periphery (Crete, a southern outpost) in terms of the perceptions of 'the mainland' *v.* 'the island'. Key scholarship used in this study has previously explored concepts related to insularity, interconnectivity and network, and includes Broodbank 2000, Constantakopoulou 2007, and Malkin 2011.<sup>584</sup> Although such studies have, to my knowledge, not been considered in the context of Greek tragedy before, these three studies in particular have nevertheless, provided interesting insights into Euripides' constructs of Crete.

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<sup>584</sup> Also of relevance are the extensive bibliographies in Broodbank (2000), Constantakopoulou (2007) and Malkin (2011). In addition, Tally (2012) e.g., who is mainly concerned with the theories of spatiality, also explores connections in literary geography. My research contributes in a small way to enlarging research in that field.

Previous critiques of Malkin's approach have included the accusation that certain theoretical models and frameworks (e.g. hybridity) have been overlooked by him, in favour of others (e.g. the notion of networks and overlaps). A consideration of the relative strengths and weaknesses of alternatives would, it is claimed, have strengthened the benefits of the claims of the theories of interconnectivity Malkin espouses, although possibly he has pushed his evidence too far.<sup>585</sup>

Constantakopoulou's approach on insularity and the role of islands in the Greek imagination, is also not without its detractors: while the concept is still considered fresh and innovative, pointing research in the use of historical and geographical models in new directions, it is also considered to show up a disjunction in the lack of analysis on how 'the microscale of local networks influenced the macroscales of the Aegean and vice versa.'<sup>586</sup> Constantakopoulou's approach is also critiqued for its lack of focus on economic geography and its lack of consideration of human or other types of resources of the islands, privileging political discourse over the importance of economic networks.<sup>587</sup> However, for the purposes of my study of Crete and insularity, the points raised by critical reviewers have not affected the centrality of my arguments in terms of a consideration of their applications to Euripides' constructs of the island.

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<sup>585</sup> Kellogg BMCR 2012.12.60 <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2012/2012-12-60.html> [27/06/16]

<sup>586</sup> Dora (2011) <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=33645> [27/06/16]

<sup>587</sup> Osborne BMCR 2008.02.22 <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2008/2008-02-22.html> [27/6/16]

On the contrary, despite these particular observations, my own findings can be seen to be a natural progression to the work of scholars, who apply themselves mainly to the studies of the history and archaeology of islands, and who articulate theories of interconnectivity based on their examination of the islands of the Greek world. So, I have nuanced their work specifically in the context of the presentation and dramatic deployment of fifth-century constructs of islands in Euripidean drama. It can be conceded that the models of insularity and interconnectivity found in the scholarship of islands may not be an exact 'fit' with my findings on the Euripidean material of the 'Cretan plays'. Nevertheless, they stimulate innovative and interesting approaches in considering tragedy and its place within the larger concepts of time and space within the Greek world, and thus enable the distinctive contribution of Cretanism in Euripidean tragedy to emerge, and be evaluated.

Some of the defining features of Euripides' Crete articulated in this study include: the island's distinct nature, its difference from Athens, and its status as a 'closed world'.<sup>588</sup> A brief consideration of the historiographical evidence from the fifth century can provide a useful background for contextualizing this apparent difference. Crete's notoriety as a result of its non-participation in the Persian Wars was certainly noted by Herodotus and others.<sup>589</sup> Furthermore, Crete was neither

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<sup>588</sup> Chapters 1-5 all discuss the various ways in which Crete's differences from Athens appear to be articulated in Euripides.

<sup>589</sup> E.g. Hdt. 7.169 on the Cretans' refusal to participate following the advice of the oracle at Delphi.

part of the Delian League or the (first or second) Athenian Empire.<sup>590</sup> It was viewed as not subscribing to the models of fifth-century citizen-participation in governance of the type seen in Athens.<sup>591</sup>

Indeed, this lack of democracy has been viewed by some scholars to be the cause of its isolation and its other 'special features'.<sup>592</sup> This background is perhaps helpful to a modern reader since it provides insights into how one aspect of Euripides' representations of the island highlights this idea of isolation and difference.

However, as we have seen, Euripides' versions then also appear again and again to nuance and problematize such perceived differences.

An additional consideration is that during the course of the fifth century, and for the first time in its history, most of the Aegean Sea came under the control of a single power, first in the form of the Delian League which then expanded into the (first) Athenian Empire.<sup>593</sup> Given the vast number of islands in the Aegean that came directly under Athenian influence, it is likely that this fact alone would have influenced Athenian ideas about insularity – what it means to be 'an island', and

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<sup>590</sup> Wallace 2010: 393

<sup>591</sup> Wallace 2010: 391; see also Plato *Minos* 318d on the general anti-Minos sentiments in Athenian tragedy.

<sup>592</sup> Wallace 2010: 396. These special features include 'extreme levels of small-scale interstate conflict, a limited trade base, an agriculturally focussed, serf-dominated economy, and a tight, stable, and conservative political structure.' I note, however, the need to be wary of equating a 'lack of democracy' with marginalization in the Greek world, given that most Greek polities were oligarchic at least in some form. On the other hand, we note that Athenians favoured democracies within their 'empire', although by no means all nor continually.

<sup>593</sup> Approximate dates are: the Delian League c.478BC-c.450BC; the Athenian (first) Empire c.450BC- end of the fifth century, c.323BC, noting, however, that neither of these entities was in existence by the end of the fifth-century.



how this is construed differently from 'the mainland'.<sup>594</sup> So, this unification under the rule of Athens meant that the way islands were perceived in the context of the mainland was highly significant.<sup>595</sup>

Given the above background, the setting of Euripides' plays in (or with references to) Crete provides some intriguing possibilities; this is especially so given that the dates for the production of all the known 'Cretan plays' appear to correspond with the years that the Athenian Empire was at its height and was threatened by war.<sup>596</sup> So, the works appear to gain added significance when studied against the background of the political landscape of the fifth century in terms of how they may be read in the context of the relationships between Crete and Athens. Athens' position as a sea power meant that notions of insularity in drama could plausibly have been shaped by fifth-century ideas of this dynamic between the centre and its periphery, and the possible effects on potential audiences' experiences of seafaring (e.g. in the context of war, trade, diplomacy, etc.). These different scenarios form possible areas for future scholarship and have only been briefly considered here, in the context of insularity.

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<sup>594</sup> See Thuc. 1.143.1 on Pericles; the Athenians could have access to vast areas of land both on the mainland as well as on islands as a result of their expansionist policies.

<sup>595</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 2, 257

<sup>596</sup> See Appendix 2 in Chapter 1 for a full chronology; e.g. *The Cretans* c.431BC; *Hippolytus* c.428BC; *Theseus* c.422BC (all dates are approximates, and based mostly on Collard and Cropp 2008a and b).

### 6.3 Insularity: 'the island' and 'the mainland'

In this section, I bring together the various previous discussions on the island-mainland dynamic from a number of different perspectives: these include Broodbank's model of islands, the notion that both 'the island' and 'the mainland' display features that resemble one another, and the agency of the sea in insularity. The sea plays a significant role in the 'Cretan plays', a feature which can be discerned by reference to Euripides' widespread and particular uses of nautical imagery in the works (e.g. see 2.5, Chapter 2). These were considered in my discussions in Chapter 4 on insularity, but here I re-visit the idea in the context of its role in the paradigm of the centre *v.* the periphery.

I begin by considering Broodbank's model (first discussed in Chapter 5) in the context of drama.<sup>597</sup> The model, although intrinsically applied to archaeological studies, considers insularity in terms of the tensions inherent in perceiving an island as veering from complete isolation to complete integration, and lying at any one point on the scale between the two extremes depending on internal and external factors. As previously suggested, Euripides' 'Cretan plays' could be contextualized within the dynamic of viewing Crete as an island, isolated and closed off from the rest of the Greek world. Conversely, however, we see Crete as part of a greater

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<sup>597</sup> Broodbank 2000:10

network of interconnectivity, linking it with Athens, Troezen, the rest of the mainland and other parts of the Greek world. As with Constantakopoulou's conclusions in her study of the history of Greek islands, I suggest that in drama too, the 'island' is generally portrayed as imaginary.<sup>598</sup> However, in the case of Euripides, Crete appears partly imaginary while also partly reflecting the lived experiences of an Athenian audience. Both innovation/invention and an 'imagined reality' appear to be combined in the representation in the dramatic portrayals of the island. On the one hand, the Crete of Euripides, like other locations in drama, is a creative expression manipulating a corpus of myths and creating new ideas by the use of language, words and their associations. On the other hand, Crete as part of a network of interconnectivity, with its exchange of people, goods and ideas, appears very much as part of the lived experiences of the fifth-century. Euripides' 'Cretan plays', then, appear to reflect this divergence and convergence between imagination and materiality articulated in the context of isolation and interconnectivity. These notions often appear to intersect in the dramatic works, and at any one point Crete appears to either veer towards complete isolation or towards complete integration.<sup>599</sup> As previously discussed, the language of the 'Cretan plays' at times appears to emphasize Crete's insular status, while at others, the island is also made to appear more like a mainland. Similarly, Athens and the mainland, in certain contexts, are

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<sup>598</sup> Constantakopoulou 2007: 255

<sup>599</sup> Following Broodbank's conceptual model (2000: 10); for the tensions between complete isolation and complete integration, see also Thuc. 5.99 on the dangers of 'unsubdued' islanders as opposed to the relative safety of enemies on the 'continent'.

made to display strikingly insular characteristics. Just as Phaedra's journey to Troezen metaphorically suggests that Crete-the-island 'appears' on the mainland, so too does Theseus' arrival on the island appear as if Athens is 'present' in Crete. This latter enactment could have had added a dramatic impact upon Athenian audiences, given its metaphorical considerations of the 'presence' of Athens in Crete, depicted in Athenian space. This 'presence' is echoed in another, a metaphorical 'presence' (considered above) where multiple identities inherent within the protagonists of the Cretan works are held up as a mirror to the Athenian audience; so, Crete is 'present' in Athens in yet another way.

The next sections consider how this blurring of the divisions between the two landmasses is represented in the plays I have discussed. I end by suggesting why this feature is significant within the context of insularity.

### **6.3.1 The portrayal of Crete and Troezen, both as 'islands'**

In previous discussions I noted that, in 'the Cretan plays', an emphasis appears to be placed on the 'insular' natures not only of Crete but also of Troezen and Athens – all in different ways.<sup>600</sup> First, in the case of Crete, its insular nature is stressed in terms of its sea-girt status, and its remoteness and isolation.<sup>601</sup> Indeed, these notions do not just appear in Euripides but are to be found from epic onwards. In the *Odyssey*

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<sup>600</sup> I.e. in a metaphorical sense. See Chapters 2, 4 and 5 in particular, on this theme.

<sup>601</sup> 'The sea surrounds the islands and cuts them off from the rest of the world more effectively than any other environment.' (Braudel 1972: 150)

19.172-3, the island is referred to as being located 'in the middle of the wine-blue water, ... seagirt...'. We also find, at *Od.* 13.256.7, references to it being 'far away, across the sea'. In addition, as if to emphasise its isolation, the notion of the Cretan Sea as dangerous and inhospitable is also stressed in epic.<sup>602</sup> Its features as an island, its distant location and its unapproachable nature are also elements found in fifth-century drama, and specifically in Euripides' 'Cretan plays'.<sup>603</sup> In addition, as considered previously, the landscape of Crete's rugged interior also plays a part in strengthening the idea of its isolation and difference as a result of its inhospitable terrain, with its high mountains and innumerable caves and archaic religious practices involving mountain deities.<sup>604</sup> We have also seen from this thesis how the presence of strange monsters and bizarre events and acts on the island, all further encourage the notion of Crete as a closed, isolated island. So, in sum, Crete's insular nature, the references to the island in terms of its distant location, 'nearly on the very fringes of Europe',<sup>605</sup> its rough seas and climate, its terrain and its monsters and religion, together appear to emphasize the idea of a closed island, with its separation, isolation and difference, as well as its distance from the centre of the Greek world, discerned from close readings of the texts. Textual analyses revealed notions of Cretanism gleaned through features such as the protagonists' modes of

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<sup>602</sup> *Od.* 3.291-300; 14.382-3; 14.293-309; 19.186-9, also Haft 1981: 134-5; all as discussed in Ch. 5; apart from rough, inhospitable seas, the idea of an isolated island is further enhanced by the evocation of strong winds and inclement weather, generally.

<sup>603</sup> For this feature recurring in other works, see e.g. Soph. *Women of Trachis* 119-20; See also pp.241-3 of Ch. 5.

<sup>604</sup> See Chapters 3 (esp. 3.5) and 5 (esp. 5.3.3).

<sup>605</sup> Eur. *Theseus* f381

address, the contexts of place, as well as through contrasts drawn between being Cretan and being Athenian, and the highlighting of similarities and differences between the Self and the Other.

Conversely, the mainland also appears, in certain cases, to display strikingly similar 'insular' elements. We saw in Chapter 2 how the landscape of Troezen was represented in ways that appeared remarkably similar to Crete's 'isandscape'.<sup>606</sup> The gods and spirits invoked on Troezen also appear to have Cretan connections. Furthermore, the imagery of a bull, a creature variously shown to have strong associations with the island of Crete, was also powerfully evoked in Troezen. Taking these features together, both Crete's insular nature and its bizarreness appear to have striking resonances in the context of Troezen; so, in Chapter 2 it was noted that the latter begins to appear increasingly like the island of Crete.

In more general terms, Euripides' 'Cretan plays' suggest that the island and the mainland- specifically, Crete and Troezen- both, at times, highlight their insular features in Euripides' works. I have also considered how this island status has been used metaphorically to stress a closed, distinct, self-contained world. Conversely, as I suggest in the next section, features that relate to 'the mainland' are also at times highlighted.

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<sup>606</sup> A term aptly used by Broodbank (2000: 21-2) to describe island landscapes and seascapes.

### 6.3.2 The portrayal of Athens and Crete each as ‘the mainland’

In Euripides’ works, Crete and Athens also appear as ‘the mainland’. As Constantakopoulou suggests, there was a clear distinction drawn in fifth-century Greek (mainly Athenian) thought between island and mainland.<sup>607</sup> This ‘fundamental division’ noted by Constantakopoulou is attested in Homer onwards.<sup>608</sup> In the case of Athens, its location in Attica as a matter of fact might appear to make its status on the mainland obvious. The distinctions between it and the rest of the mainland on the one hand, and islands on the other, are also stressed in Herodotus and Thucydides.<sup>609</sup> However, as this study shows, there does not appear to be just one designated ‘mainland’ on the Greek world; on the contrary, the perceptions of what constitutes the mainland seem to shift, depending on the context. In Euripides’ works, it would appear that Athens and Troezen are portrayed variously as ‘Crete’s mainland’.<sup>610</sup>

As discerned from the ‘Cretan plays’, Athens and Troezen are, from one perspective, set in opposition to Crete – that is, the former are not islands but distinctly part of

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<sup>607</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 16-19

<sup>608</sup> *Il.* 2.635; *Od.* 14.97-8; Homeric *Hymn to Delian Apollo* II.20-1; Hes. *Theogony* II.963-4; Old Oligarch 2.2-3; Strabo (see Aujac 1994: 213); and Diodorus 5.82

<sup>609</sup> Hdt. 1.142.4-1.143.1 categorically differentiates islands and mainlands in terms of being sea powers; islands can have claims to the sea in a way mainlanders cannot. (Also, Hdt. 1.27; 1.174.3; 3.39.4); Also Thuc. 1.5 and 5.99 on the opposition between islands and the mainland.

<sup>610</sup> Generally speaking, the central areas of Boeotia, Phocis etc. could be considered to be ‘mainland Greece’; however, Attica appears as Athens’ mainland, and Piraeus, as this study notes, is almost an island according to Thucydides. It would appear that what finally determines what ‘the mainland’ comprises depends on the context and particular perspective.

the same mainland. These features were noted especially in the context of the Troezen of *Hippolytus* as discussed in Chapter 2. It was also seen there how Crete was 'veering towards becoming the mainland' by the metaphorical implications of Phaedra's journey to Troezen, and also the tying of the ropes of Cretan vessels to the ancient (mainland) port of Mounichia. And just as the depictions of an insular Crete in epic were noted, so too was the idea apparent that Crete behaves at times like the mainland. First, its size and extent, described as a 'country', as well as its population size, are features that are mentioned (*Od.* 13.256 'wide Crete'; 14.199-200 'Crete, a spacious land'; 19.173-5 'a handsome country, fertile, ... and there are many peoples in it, innumerable; there are ninety cities'; *Il.* 2.649 'Crete of the hundred cities.' etc.).<sup>611</sup> This latter idea of a many-cited Crete is echoed in Euripides' *The Cretans* f472.3 ('... Crete and its hundred cities!'), which emphasizes its size and high population; these features possibly make it more akin to a region on the mainland than an island. As I discussed in Chapter 5, Crete's large size and geography sometimes have the effect of excluding it from general studies on islands (e.g. Rackham and Moody refer to it as a 'miniature continent').<sup>612</sup> Crete, then, appears at times like a continent or the mainland, and unlike a typical island. Euripides' Crete too appears to be at times represented as an island, and at others like the mainland,

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<sup>611</sup> *Odyssey* trans. Lattimore 1967; *Iliad* trans. Lattimore 1961

<sup>612</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 14-15 and n. 74 cf. Rackham and Moody 1996: xi. Interestingly, Thuc. 5.99 equates continents with safety (and the mainland).



and in yet other contexts, even perceived as being somewhere between the two, ideas that can be seen in epic onwards as well as in current studies.<sup>613</sup>

As I discuss next, this blurring of the island-mainland divide has important ramifications when considered in the contexts of insularity and interconnectivity. I have discussed the concept of insularity throughout the thesis (and especially in Chapter 5) as an expression of isolation and separation on the one hand, and networks of interconnectivity on the other. If the former represents a closed, bounded world, then the latter appears as one that is open and receptive. But as we have also already seen in this study, the idea of insularity in ancient Greek thought, far from being clearly defined and prescribed, was a more fluid concept, where the distinction between its two components, the island and the mainland, becomes blurred. We have already seen, for example, how Athens assumes the status of a 'virtual island' and Crete can be seen as a 'continent'. In this context, I concur with Constantakopoulou that the 'mainland-island distinction' is an important consideration in fifth-century Athenian conceptualizations of space in the Greek world (especially as noted in Herodotus and Thucydides). However, my own findings suggest that the distinction, although perhaps more clearly reflected in historiographical writings, is much more nuanced in drama. As Connor suggests in discussing Thucydides Book 6, the divisions between Athens ('mainland') and Sicily

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<sup>613</sup> See Chapters 1, 2 and 5 where I have considered these ideas from several different perspectives.

(‘island’) begin to appear less distinct, especially in the context of Sicily’s size and population, and given that Sicily is almost part of the Italian mainland. So, I share instead, for example, Connor’s perspective that the divisions between the two ultimately were much less hermetic than suggested, and much more nuanced, fluid and mutable depending on the context.<sup>614</sup> These same factors were also significant in Crete’s case, as discussed above. ‘The antithesis, island *v.* continent, is thus broken down and we witness the conflict between a continental power that is almost an island against the major city of an island that is almost a continent’.<sup>615</sup> In interpreting Thucydides’ narrative on the Sicilian expedition, Connor is attempting to show how Thucydides deconstructs the opposition between the two places, that is, from an Athenian perspective; so, this is anything but a neutral description of Sicily. However, the convergences with a dramatic Crete are notably striking here.<sup>616</sup> I suggest equally that in the ‘Cretan plays’ we see a particular Euripidean (if not Athenian) perspective on Crete on its status as *both* island and mainland, a perspective possibly not seen before or since the fifth-century.<sup>617</sup> In this context, the sea has an important role to play.

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<sup>614</sup> See Constantakopoulou 2007: 16-19 esp. 18; also see Connor 1984: 160; certainly in literary works, the island-mainland divide as part of the dynamics of insularity is used metaphorically.

<sup>615</sup> Connor 1984: 159-60

<sup>616</sup> As briefly discussed in Chapter 1, Sicily is thought to have been featured in dramatic works by Euripides and Aeschylus, both of whom are believed to have written works called *Women of Aetna*. These works are believed to be lost to us. Sicily is also featured indirectly in Euripides’ ‘Cretan plays’ in the context of Minos and Daedalus’ journey there from Crete (also discussed in Chapters 1 and 5). So, a comparison of Crete with Sicily seems to be appropriate on a few different levels.

<sup>617</sup> Accepting that there may be works by other playwrights that are lost to us which might suggest more general perspectives on Crete. Also, as I have suggested previously, the fact that the works were written during the years of the Athenian Empire might have given them a particular slant. This aspect has not been fully investigated in this study, and remains an area for future research.

#### 6.4 The sea's role in insularity

The common factor underlying my discussions of the various notions of insularity has been the sea, with its role as both 'unifier' of mainland with island, as well as 'separator' of the two regions. Chapters 2, 4 and 5 considered how the various sailings undertaken by the different protagonists could be interpreted in ways to suggest ideas of connecting and separating the island from the mainland, as well as other parts of the Greek world. As Broodbank describes it, '[F]or true islands, the sea's role can vary from that of insulator to hyper-conductor'.<sup>618</sup>

The frequent sea-crossings from myth which are emphasized in Euripides' 'Cretan plays' gain greater significance in this thesis when considered in the context of current theories of interconnectivity. The central role of the sea as part of 'a small Greek world' is a view of the fifth century that is gaining in importance.<sup>619</sup> Such a world was one which was intensively interconnected by means of networks of trade and expansionist policies.<sup>620</sup> As Malkin proposes, 'links, both planned and random, rapidly reduced the distance between the nodes of network, turning the vast Mediterranean and the Black Sea into a "small world"', a defining term in current

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<sup>618</sup> Broodbank 2000: 16-17; a 'true island' as a geographical description of a landmass entirely surrounded by water; also see McKechnie 2002:128 'some islands are more "island-like" than others'.

<sup>619</sup> being the title of Malkin's 2011 monograph

<sup>620</sup> Malkin 2011: 50; ships were usually designed for warfare, trade and as a means of moving populations; also (ibid.) p.16 where "'Network" (...) is not just a metaphor but a descriptive and heuristic term.'

theories of interconnectivity.<sup>621</sup> These networks informed, sometimes created, and even came to express what we call Greek civilization.<sup>622</sup> This theory suggests, among other things, a high degree of interconnectivity between islands, other islands, the mainland as well as other regions of the Greek world. When applied to Euripides' construct of Crete, the theories of interconnectivity offer greater insights into the Crete-Athens dynamic in terms of the centre and the periphery. But, as Malkin suggests, in order for the theories of interconnectivity to be applied, it is necessary to revise the 'centre-periphery dynamic' of the fifth-century Greek world, replacing it with one implying a greater commonality between regions.<sup>623</sup> In terms of the 'Cretan plays' a revision of the 'centre-periphery dynamic' allows us to view the Crete-Athens connections as part of a new paradigm that reflects a greater commonality between the two regions. This paradigm shift, in turn, has the effect of turning those self-referential questions that an Athenian spectator might pose when considering Crete as a distant, 'other world' into questions that matter equally in Athens ('this world'); these questions might include the ones that strike at the heart of their own political, rhetorical and ideological concerns. So here we see the possibility of that 'other world' being brought directly into a dialogue with 'this world', where, physically-speaking, Crete 'appears' in Athenian theatrical and civic space, and metaphorically-speaking, 'Crete is *in* Athens'.

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<sup>621</sup> Ibid; indicating a series of tight, overlapping routes of trade and exchange.

<sup>622</sup> Malkin 2011: 5 and n.2

<sup>623</sup> Following Malkin 2011, an area covering 'the vast Mediterranean and the Black Sea'.

In a sense, Attic tragedy has always staged 'other places' in a broadly similar way, on the Athenian stage, in Athenian space, so, in itself, this observation in the case of the 'Cretan plays' is nothing new. However, in raising this comparison, this study is attempting to draw out some further possible reasons- nuanced as these may be- of including such 'other places' on the Athenian stage.<sup>624</sup> It can be observed that different locales elicit different responses: as discussed previously, e.g., whereas Thebes in tragedy is often depicted as the city constantly under siege<sup>625</sup>, plays set in the foreign, non-Greek world (such as *Helen*, in Egypt, *Iphigenia* in Taurus,) challenged the Greeks' conception of a particular land or people. On the other hand, Crete, a land that may be distant from Athens but is clearly within the Greek world, though 'on its fringes', the locale of the island can be used to draw out a different set of complexities compared to Egypt or Taurus.<sup>626</sup> On Crete, the women's lack of sexual self-control result in their fall from grace and a displacement of societal status quo. Also, strange creatures in that 'other place' of Crete such as the Minotaur make the audience ponder on what distinguishes humans from animals etc. So, we find that this focus on 'different locales on the Athenian stage' approach makes

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<sup>624</sup> I say 'further, possible reasons' given the extent to which scholarship already exists on the roles of 'the other place' in Athenian tragedy viz. Zeitlin 1986, Hall 1989 [1991], Wright 2005, et al. But unlike previous studies, this study considers Crete as an 'other place'.

<sup>625</sup> E.g. in Eur. *Herakles*, *Children of Herakles*, *The Bacchae*

<sup>626</sup> See Hall 1991 [1989]:169 '...in the fifth century it (i.e. Crete) was clearly believed to be Hellenic' (my parenthesis). Also see Eur. *Theseus* f381 'Nearly on the very fringes of Europe'

Euripides' Crete good to think with, against and through these vexed questions of being, identity and sense of place in fifth-century Athens.

In any event, implied in the paradigm of connection *v.* separation between the regions is the 'perpetual continuum' of the sea,<sup>627</sup> which was perceived as the centre of Greece, a single sea which connected the various landmasses (in Malkin's words 'the land separates and the sea connects').<sup>628</sup> This idea of the central role of the sea is stressed in Horden and Purcell's study of the Mediterranean, too: 'the characteristic contrast [is provided] between the "'topographical fragmentation'" of the Mediterranean lands and the "'connectivity provided by the sea itself.'"'<sup>629</sup> So, these are seen as the 'two key environmental ingredients in Mediterranean history.'<sup>630</sup>

In addition to the central role of the sea in an historical context, its deployment as part of the imaginary landscape in tragedy (specifically, in the 'Cretan plays') reveals a more mixed view. The sea is evoked several times in different ways in the various selected works of Euripides, first, in graphic detail where the physical qualities of its waters and waves are described. Secondly, the sea is also evoked as the conveyer of queens, kings and heroes (for example, Phaedra and Theseus) over the waves. So,

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<sup>627</sup> Malkin 2011: 54 cf. Horden and Purcell 2000

<sup>628</sup> Malkin 2011: 15

<sup>629</sup> Plato *Phaedo* 109a-b where the sea is described as the pond (between the Pillars of Herakles and the river Phasis) that is the centre of Greece.

<sup>630</sup> Malkin 2011: 15 cf. Horden and Purcell 2000: 101; see also Constantakopoulou 2007, especially Chapter 1.

the importance of the sea in the 'Cretan plays' can be discerned by reference to Euripides' widespread and particular uses of nautical imagery in the works.<sup>631</sup> I suggest that in each of the plays nautical imagery can be seen to be deployed by the poet's implicit references to: (i) the paradoxical qualities of the sea, which have the effect of conveying (ii) polarities such as order/chaos and civilization/wildness from Crete to Athens and vice versa.

In terms of fifth-century drama, the sea was a paradoxical entity, displaying both benevolent and malevolent traits. Examples of the deployment of its antinomical interpretations abound in the works of Euripides already considered. These include the sea as 'conveyer' (as in the cases of Phaedra's and Theseus' respective journeys), the sea as 'confiner' (as in the cases of Europa's and Pasiphae's 'entrapment' on the island-intentional or otherwise), as well as the sea as 'liberator' as in the case of the freeing of Athenian youths after Theseus' journey to Crete; and the act of Theseus vanquishing Minos was seen as one which 'liberated' Crete from yokes of its oppressive past (also see Chapter 5).<sup>632</sup> So, the sea appears indirectly as Crete's own 'liberator'. The sea's paradoxical qualities can be seen to be taken further here where it represents both the means of escape and the medium of captivity, seen in terms of a boundary which is self-imposed or imposed upon other characters: Theseus and

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<sup>631</sup> Discussed in Chapters 2.5 and 4. As Wright 2005: 203 and n.153 notes, Euripides' depictions of sea-imagery are outstanding among the playwrights, cf. Lesky 1947: 246 who discusses what might have set Euripides' treatment of sea-imagery apart from other tragedians.

<sup>632</sup> Plato *Phaedo* 58a-b; see Mills 1997:13, 19 for interpretations of this myth.

Ariadne escape by sea while Phaedra remains confined in Crete,<sup>633</sup> on the other hand, Daedalus is held captive on the island by Minos and can only flee by flying away. So, in Euripides, the sea is deployed in different ways to suggest both escape and captivity.

Similes of the sea as calm or stormy are also used to illustrate characters' emotions and associated situations and events: for example, the sea as a symbol for high emotion is seen in *Hippolytus* line 304, where the Nurse warns her mistress not to 'go on being more stubborn than the sea'; also, in lines 732-75, sea-related metaphors are graphically evinced to allude to Phaedra's fast-sinking fortunes. The states of the sea as well its changeable nature are variously stressed to nuance emotional changes as well as the fates of protagonists.<sup>634</sup>

The role of the sea in intra-regional movement was also paradoxical. Seas and ships allowed mobility and trade, but they also brought with them perils of shipwreck, piracy and dangers encountered in open seas, both above and below water. As Rehm concludes in his study of space in tragedy, 'both the vital role of the sea and its dangers surface time and again in tragedy'.<sup>635</sup> Metaphors of sailing and navigation in tragedy often reflect the dangers associated with sea-voyages that

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<sup>633</sup> Only to be 'freed' later by her marriage to Theseus (when she sails away from Crete in *Hipp.*).

<sup>634</sup> See Chapter 2 (e.g. 2.2.1) for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>635</sup> Rehm 2002: 61 who lists *Hecuba*, the Trojan trilogy (*Alexandros*, *Palamedes*, *Trojan Women*) *Cyclops* and *Proteus* as examples from Euripides' works depicting storm and shipwreck.



protagonists undertake.<sup>636</sup> In the ‘Cretan plays’ as well as other works by Euripides, we continue to find this idea of the sea as a metaphor for death and danger, representing wandering without end, uncertainty, toil and endurance (notions also seen earlier in the *Odyssey*).<sup>637</sup> The phrase ἀξένου πόντου, ‘the inhospitable sea’<sup>638</sup> perhaps encapsulates the notion of the sea as the great unknown, and is particularly apt as a description in tragedy of the Cretan Sea. So, the sea is deployed in both affective and cognitive terms. The sea can also be viewed as marginal space.

## 6.5 The sea as marginal space

We have seen how the paradoxical qualities of the sea generally include danger and uncertainty but also serve to promote the idea of ‘unifier of space’ (e.g. ties between Crete and Mounichia) and ‘deliverer’, for example, from tyranny (Theseus) or from one’s past (Phaedra). Euripides’ portrayals of land- and sea-scapes also appear to stress another aspect of the sea: its shores. Like the island itself, the seashore is another marginal zone.<sup>639</sup> Euripides’ use of the seashore as significant space becomes evident from his ‘Cretan plays’; in each, the seashore appears to act as a key location in the story: Europa arrives in Crete from Phoenicia (referred to in *Hypsipyle* f752g.19-26); Phaedra sails from Cretan shores to the shores of Attica in *Hippolytus*

<sup>636</sup> E.g. *Hipp.* 752-762; See also Rehm 2002: 61 and 329n.163; in Euripides’ works *Medea* is an example; also Aeschylus *Seven Against Thebes*; Sophocles *Ajax* and *Philoctetes* which both also emphasize the sea and its dangers. See Pindar, *Pythian* 4 and Bacchylides 17 for sea voyages (including departures and arrivals) being associated with danger.

<sup>637</sup> See 6.3.1 for references to Crete in *Od.* Also, see Wright 2005: 207;

<sup>638</sup> Found in *IT* 253 and in recurring theme in Greek literature, generally. Apart from *IT*, other works which highlight this aspect of the sea include e.g. *Helen* and *Andromache*.

<sup>639</sup> Considered in Chapter 5.

(as does the bull travel between Crete and Troezen); Theseus arrives in Crete from Athens in *Theseus*; Polyidus arrives in Crete from Corinth in *Polyidus*; and Atreus, Thyestes and Nauplius all arrive on the island from Argos in *Cretan Women*. In at least two of the works, the landscapes of the coast serve to suggest their importance in the context of the land-sea divide. Significant events unfold in this location. These include, for example, the discovery of Phaedra in a delirious state, the bull's attack on Hippolytus on the coast, and Theseus' grand arrival on the shores of Crete. The seashore is a marginal scape where dramatic events unfold.<sup>640</sup> I propose that the doubly marginal natures of the seashore and *also* the island itself serve to emphasize boundaries of different kinds as separators and unifiers. In the case of *Hippolytus*, the sea even invades the prerogatives of dry land causing the protagonist to meet his death in a chariot on the shore; the Messenger describes the event like a shipwreck.<sup>641</sup> So, here the shore 'becomes' the sea. As Wright proposes, the seashore can be seen as a metaphor that 'comes to represent the boundaries of the characters' situations.'<sup>642</sup> The paradoxes of the sea then become the paradoxes that Crete itself represents: the island embodies aspects of the sea such as conveyance (Europa), mystery and ambiguity (the Minotaur, Pasiphae, and Polyidus), otherness (Phaedra), dangers and troubles (Theseus' adventures). So, Crete itself can be seen as both

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<sup>640</sup> See Wright 2005: 211; see also Rehm 2002 130-1 and 347 n.65 on the coast as 'the eternal landscape against which Ajax measures human mutability'.

<sup>641</sup> *Hipp.* 1211-40 'like a sailor pulling an oar' (1222-3).

<sup>642</sup> See Wright 2005: 214.

separator and unifier through its intimate associations with the seas around it, as well as between it and the mainland.

We also see the seashore's symbolic significance as part of the landscape. As Buxton suggests, 'the shore is narrow – a line, a boundary, a margin where opposites meet' where 'action is located on a series of symbolic and literal margins.'<sup>643</sup> Buxton's terminology also suggests a perception that the shore is part of a continuum between inland/a solid landmass and the sea/a watery mass. Whether the protagonists look out towards the sea or inwards towards the land, they find themselves at these margins. Phaedra's display of her delirium by the seashore illustrates the impossible situation she finds herself in. In *Theseus*, the Herdsman's speech on the seashore signals the clash that is about to unfold between two value systems. In *Polyidus*, wisdom is discerned on the seashore.<sup>644</sup> This 'coastal setting of the island' in turn symbolizes the liminal situation that the characters find themselves in, with their physical and mental conditions being reflected in the marginality of landscape itself. Thus, in the 'Cretan plays' the landscape, seascape and 'in-between zones' such as the coast are evoked in distinctive ways that intensify the dramatic action in terms of extremes and liminality.

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<sup>643</sup> See Buxton 1994: 101-3.

<sup>644</sup> *Polyidus* f636; see Collard and Cropp 2008a:96-9.

## 6.6 The agency of the sea in material and metaphorical terms

The sea also plays a vital role in conveying the protagonists in the 'Cretan plays' from Crete to other parts of the Greek world. Theseus (*Theseus*) returns to Athens after his adventures in Crete and Dia (or Naxos); Atreus and Thyestes (*Cretan Women*) return to Argos; Daedalus eventually returns to Athens via Crete and Sicily (*The Cretans*), and the seer Polyidus (*Polyidus*) is finally allowed to return to Corinth after his adventures on Crete. In each, an element of escape is implicit, a feature also noted in *Hippolytus* 733-41, where the Women of Troezen express their desire for freedom and escape by flying over the seas. The metaphor for escape invoked in this passage appears to be inextricably linked to Phaedra's journey from Crete; so, the Troezenian Women's references to Phaedra's journey allude to both her 'escape' from Crete but also an escape from life to death, where the imageries of both ships and birds are invoked. As Wright also observes, nearly all odes of escape and geographical mobility involve metaphors of birds or ships.<sup>645</sup> The idea of geographical mobility evoked by metaphors of ships and birds to an extent reinforces the idea of interconnectivity between the regions given that the protagonists travel (or escape) from and to locations within the Greek world. So, once more we can discern the dynamics of insularity and interconnectivity at play, articulated as a mainland-island divide, given that the same characters traverse

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<sup>645</sup> Wright 2005: 222

different regions, each time criss-crossing the seas, and each time bridging two different parts of the Greek world (indicating interconnectivity), and each time separating themselves from the place they leave behind (implying isolation and insularity).<sup>646</sup>

Metaphorical interpretations of the sea represent a vast area of study, of which this is only one. For example, recent scholarship investigates ideas around diving into the sea as a means of crossing cosmic barriers by transgressing 'from the ordinary world into another state of consciousness', bridging earth, sky and sea.<sup>647</sup> Beaulieu's approach exemplifies the variety of research questions that can be raised by different metaphorical interpretations of the sea, although my study departs in yet another direction in considering sea crossings in tragedy, as serving to link as well as divide regions. The sea in my study appears also to articulate differences and similarities between island and the mainland.<sup>648</sup>

## 6.7 A Multi-faceted Crete

This chapter has primarily attempted to consider Euripides' 'Cretan plays' in the context of contemporary models of insularity and interconnectivity. We have seen

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<sup>646</sup> See Faugeres 1989:89 ('isolation is inscribed in the nature of an island'). See also Constantakopoulou 2007:3 on isolation and distinctiveness as important features of insular life and essential elements in the concept of insularity.

<sup>647</sup> See Beaulieu 2016: 147,152, and her Ch. 5 generally

<sup>648</sup> One aspect of Beaulieu's (2016:157) study does strike a chord with this thesis, in considering cases where 'the vast and indefinite space of the sea impedes social and marital bonds', a perspective that could be applied to Phaedra.

how the models can be usefully considered, first in viewing Crete as an 'island', distant and distinct from Athens and the mainland. Various themes emerged from the detailed textual analyses in previous chapters which stressed Crete's distinct, isolated nature, including the portrayals of Minos, the Cretan women, the Minotaur, Cretan gods and spirits and the location of Crete itself.

The model of interconnectivity, conversely, has stressed reticulate approaches which suggest strong links between Crete and other regions, implicit in the many travels undertaken by protagonists in these works as well as by the emphasis of similarities in culture and religion, and together, highlighting notions of the interplay between unity and plurality. These two sides of the same coin, insularity and interconnectivity, then, can be used to consider Euripides' Crete as part of what Broodbank, for example, describes as 'a continuum between complete independence and complete integration with the outside world'.<sup>649</sup>

A constant theme emerging in this study has been that of a potential opposition of sorts. This feature appears to be articulated variously in terms of the tensions between island and mainland, isolation and interconnectivity (in this chapter), Cretan and 'other' (Chapter 2), and the multiple identities inherent in certain characters (and their potential for interpretation) within the selected works. (Chapter

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<sup>649</sup> Broodbank 2000: 10

5). As considered in 6.1 and elsewhere, Euripides, through the 'Cretan plays', appears to be exploring what counteracts rigid, conceptual polarities. The poet achieves this through the depiction and consideration of animals, fantastical beasts and animal-like natures of humans. Plausibly, these paradigms as discerned in Euripides' Cretan works play on a myriad of different political and social concerns of fifth-century Athens, such as issues of self-identity and gender roles.

While detailed studies of the implications of this opposition-commonality model for other contexts in drama remain for future scholarship, this study has attempted to offer insights into some of the ways in which Euripides' perceptions and representations of Crete and Cretans can be interpreted. By considering contemporary, heuristic models of theories including, specifically, insularity and interconnectivity in the context of Euripidean drama, this thesis has departed in new directions from previous studies in its study of the relationships of an island and its mainland.

In considering the notion of Cretanism within the relevant plays by Euripides, I have explored the ways in which the portrayal of the Cretan myths in various ways has been 'good to think with, against, and through' in terms of the important questions of the fifth century, including identity and what it meant to be Greek. I have approached thinking about the distinctive contribution of Euripides' 'Cretan plays'

in two ways: first, by the consideration of other 'non-Cretan' works by Euripides, and secondly, by analyzing the 'Cretan-ness' of certain characters in other works.

First, in Chapter 2, the Phaedra character in *Hippolytus* was compared with Medea in *Medea*, in order to explore how self-identity and the identifying of others compare with those in the selected works; there, instances of both the nature and frequency of such references were analysed. So, e.g., as discussed in Chapter 2, just as Medea as the "paradigmatic, 'transgressive' woman cannot fully be understood without reference to her barbarian provenance", Phaedra's and Pasiphae's natures and actions cannot perhaps fully be explained away without reference to their Cretan origins.<sup>650</sup> Thebes, another locale as a 'control' was also considered in this chapter as well as in Chapter 1.

Next, in Chapters 4-5, Pasiphae, the Minotaur, Theseus and Minos were also variously analysed in order to consider, *inter alia*, some of the antinomies in fifth-century Greek thought such as the Athenian-non-Athenian, Cretan-non-Cretan, male-female, submissive-transgressive, human-animal, hero-monster type distinctions.

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<sup>650</sup> Hall 1991 [1989]:203



As we have seen, in Euripides' 'Cretan plays', these constructs have been most marked in terms of a range of antinomies including those previously mentioned, and also including those relating to self-other, island-mainland, and centre-periphery. A study of each set of polemic has broadly revealed the same nuanced view of gradations of difference as well as similarity between each of those pairs. It is noteworthy though, that while considering the question of the possible roles of antinomies present in the work, no firm conclusions have been drawn- suffice to say that Euripides works, being full of mutually exclusive and contradictory beliefs, cannot be reconciled. His interests in the construct of Cretanism should perhaps only make sense when considered as a phenomenon typifying the sophistic movement of fifth-century Athens of which the poet was an integral part. So, we find that, from the mouths of the mythical characters come arguments which both praise, defend, as well as criticize and deconstruct the different sides of the polemic only for the arguments to be turned on their heads and be represented in new, innovative and different formulations from anything ever considered previously. Perhaps it is the very nature of these reformulations that show how Euripides' works have been invaluable in deconstructing and complicating (rigid) polarities, and in thinking with, through and against extant constructs of identity and place in the Greek world.

To conclude, this thesis can claim to add to the existing body of scholarship in Greek tragedy in three ways by its analyses of Euripidean tragedy on Crete, including fragments: first, in suggesting how a consideration of the notion of Cretanism can provide insights into the construction and provisionality of notions such as identity, and polarities; secondly, in suggesting how theoretical models of interconnectivity could, by considering them broadly, be applied to provide new insights in the study of Athenian drama by bringing each into dialogue with the other. Finally, in considering how the concept of islands are challenged and nuanced in Euripides' 'Cretan plays', I have opened up issues for future research in Greek drama and fifth-century thought, more broadly. Taken together, it is hoped that this study has provided some insights into Euripides' possible perceptions of Crete, an island hovering, in the minds of the Athenian audience, between the spheres of lived experiences and conceptual representations.

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